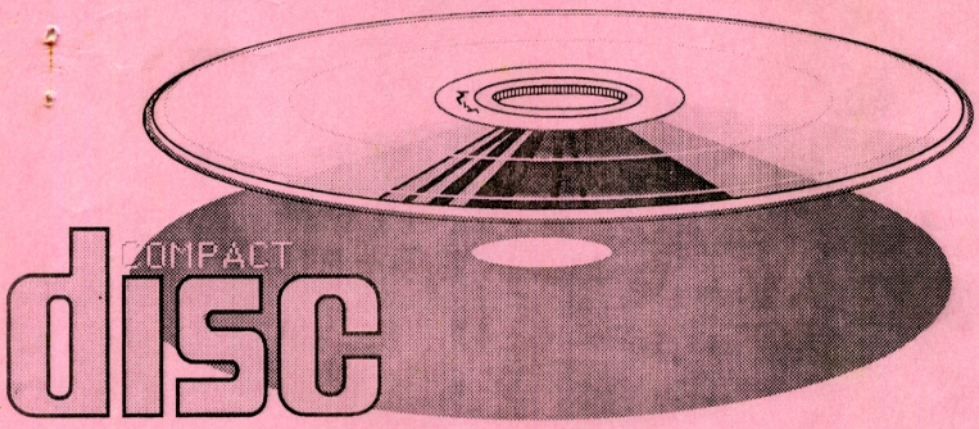
The Crosby Voice



BC on CD

ISSUE No 45

MARCH 1989

Registered by Australia Post

Registration No VBH 2120

THE VICTORIAN BING CROSBY SOCIETY

PO Box 422, South Melbourne
Victoria, Australia 3205,

Affiliated with the Queensland
Bing Crosby Society
PO Box 92, Ferny Hills
Queensland, Australia 4055

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Houghtons Lane, Eccleston,
St Helens WA10 5LD

HELLO AGAIN,

(One moment while I slip on a record of 'Hearts and Flowers'.) With all good intent, I returned from holidays in early January, hoping to get the first magazine for 1989 out of the way before the pressure of work built up. However, before going away I had turned my answering machine on and there were a few messages to listen to, a couple relating to work required. Mistake, bad mistake. Two-and-a-half months later, the dust clears, and here I am putting the finishing touches to the again biggest-ever edition of the Crosby Voice. I hope that you enjoy what you find in its pages.

Our cover story this issue concerns the swift and remarkable rise of the Compact Disc, and because so many Crosby recordings are being issued on this new medium (especially in the UK), I thought that we should devote a major feature to the fact, supported with several magazine and newspaper articles testifying to the popularity of CDs. We lead off on page 3 with an article entitled 'Bing's Microgroove Millions' which quotes some amazing figures for Crosby record sales, far higher than we've ever heard before. We also feature a rundown on all the new Crosby CDs which have been issued in recent months.

Other highlights in this issue include:

Page 27: A different viewpoint on the AT&T takeover of the Crosby golf tournament at Pebble Beach. Maybe it wasn't all bad.
Pages 28 - 31: Two more Crosby Profiles.
Pages 32 - 36: How they used to promote Bing's new movies - original ads.
Page 42: Vern Taylor has contributed another well researched, well written article. This time the topic is BING AT DEL MAR and Vern has also supplied the club cassette library with a special tape to support the story. For those who can play the piano, we've also included the original sheet music of the song: 'Where The Turf Meets The Surf'.
Page 59: Last Christmas, The Museum of Broadcasting in New York featured a special series of programmes on Bing tracing his radio career and including, quote: "...recently discovered local broadcasts from the advent of his career." (!!!) Read about it on their flyer.
Page 62: John Joyce in the UK has just published Colin Pugh's 'The Alternate Bing Crosby' in a superb hard cover edition, illustrated throughout with rare record labels supplied by Don Haizelden.
Page 67: There's now a video recorder that plays <u>all</u> video systems from around the world through an <u>ordinary</u> TV set.

We have a few copies of 'Personalities On Parade Vol 1' (reviewed last issue) for sale to members in Australia. Cost is $17.00 per disc plus postage. Please do not send money but write first to make sure that we have a copy for you. The usual club address.

Frank Sinatra, Liza Minelli and Sammy Davis were in town recently and they packed Melbourne's new 16,000 seat National Tennis Centre. Sinatra was in very good voice, far better than on his recent records and there was something very special in seeing three people live on stage who at one time or another had worked closely with Bing.

Enough of that, let's start as always with Future Functions.

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FUTURE FUNCTIONS

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(You can't trust anyone anymore, not even TV stations! Two movies we had planned for showing early this year, 'Rhythm On The River' and 'Dixie' have both been aired in recent weeks! Most frustrating.)

MONDAY, APRIL 24TH

As it has been quite a while since we screened ROAD TO RIO, we've decided to make that our main feature of the evening (especially before it turns up on television!).

Backing it up, we'll be screening a series of short films from the 1930s and 40s. We used to do this quite a lot in the early days of the society but haven't for some time. At this stage, we're not exactly sure what we'll show, but they'll be clips featuring artists of the calibre of the Mills Brothers, Duke Ellington, Ethel Merman, etc.

Venue, as always, is the theatrette of the AMP Building, Corner Bourke and William Streets, City.

Starting time is 7.30 sharp.

Members: $5
Pensioners and students: $3
Non-members: $6

MONDAY, JUNE 26TH

I would hope that we could get another magazine out in time to tell you of this meeting, but don't count on it.

Please enter this date in your diary now! No reminders will be sent.

We'll be screening:

1. THE BIG BROADCAST OF 1936 in which Bing makes a guest appearance to sing 'I Wished On The Moon'.

2. A group of Bing's MACK SENNETT SHORTS from 1931.

THE REMAINING DATES FOR 1989

AUGUST 14
OCTOBER 23
DECEMBER 11

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BING'S MICROGROOVE MILLIONS

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(The following is taken from a paper delivered to the convention of the American Phonograph Industry by David Mackarino, held in conjunction with celebrations to commemorate the 100th anniversary of recorded sound. Mr Mackarino is involved in musical copyright administration and his facts are officially approved.)

The phonograph industry is enjoying a cautious boost due to the growing CD market, especially where a major company has back catalogue resources which can be drawn on for conversion to CD.

These days, if you've got £1 million profit to re-invest, as a rule of thumb, you're looking at being able to sign three or four new artistes. By the time you have paid advance money for the artists to live on, invested in the recording of high quality album material, made a couple of videos and put the act on the road, you're talking a quarter of a million pounds for each act.

Back catalogue from the 78 rpm era is expensive to re-master to digital/CD quality...such material cannot sustain a major company today, but it can create wealth enough to show a profit which could not be obtained through a new recording artist...because every facet of putting out a record has gone up significantly, a new artist is not going to sell spectacularly more records now, but is certainly going to cost spectacularly more to record. Back catalogue support is the means to create some wealth in the CD market at this time.

Back in the days of the 78 rpm record, Bing Crosby was awarded no less than 21 gold discs...each one celebrating the sale of 1 million copies of a song, of course, many of them sold several millions. At the last count of his 78 records sales, Crosby had sold 400 million of them. When microgroove albums booted out the 78s...they were used to make up long playing compilations, this started as long ago as 1954, or before? Nobody counted anymore, except those looking after royalty/musical copyright matters...the albums piled up, they were withdrawn, re-issued again, the material amounting to many hundred of songs, was re-worked over and over again in compilations around the world. With over 60 Bing Crosby CDs now on the market and many more on the way, the value of this particular back catalogue can be seen.

Looking at the trade figures for the Crosby 78 rpm compilations to microgroove albums, reveals that during those years since 1954...many of the songs have attained the million seller status...while others have simply added to the millions already reached as 78 pressings. Long playing records had great appeal, with millions of playing units being sold in the first few years, a trade which grew with the great strides in improved recording and reproduction technology. Back-catalogue material made even greater sales, with Crosby alone turning his 400 million sales into 1,000 million today. Figures banded about for his 'White Christmas' seem to vary between 30 million and 45 million, almost as if the industry is afraid to tell the truth...which is that those figures are over 20 years out of

date...it gains every year, so start counting from 90 millions. Bing Crosby is welcome on CD...that's for sure!

The microgroove million selling 78s include: I Surrender Dear, Just a Gigolo, Out of Nowhere, Just One More Chance, I Found a Million Dollar Baby, Stardust, Dinah, Can't We Talk It Over, Sweet Georgia Brow, Please, I've Got the World on a String, My Honey's Lovin' Arms, Thanks, Temptation, Did You Ever See A Dream Walking, June in January, I'm An Old Cowhand, Pennies From Heaven, A Fine Romance, Smarty, Sweet Lelani, Can I Forget You, Basin Street Blues, Small Fry, I've Got a Pocketful Of Dreams, Mexicali Rose, You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby, My Melancholy Baby, I Cried For You, If I Had My Way, Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams, Yes Indeed, It's Been a Long Long Time, The Spaniard That Blighted My Life, Mr Gallagher and Mr Shean, Only Forever, I'll Be Seeing You, The Waiter The Porter and the Upstairs Maid, You Are My Sunshine, Deep In The Heart Of Texas, Silent Night, Summertime, Wait Til The Sun Shines Nellie, Lazy, White Christmas, Walking the Floor Over You, Moonlight Becomes You, Sunday Monday or Always, Jingle Bells, Swinging On a Star, I'll Remember April, An Irish Lullaby, Dearly Beloved, Don't Fence Me In, Put It There Pal, The Rose of Tralee, Where the Blue of the Night, I Can't Begin To Tell You, Who's Sorry Now, McNamara's Band, Sioux City Sue, Blue Skies, A Gal In Calico, South America Take It Away, Alexanders Ragtime Band, Galway Bay, Busy Doing Nothing, Far Away Places, Dear Hearts and Gentle People, How Can You Buy Killarney, Play a Simple Melody, Sam's Song, Moonlight Bay, Gone Fishin', Zing a Little Zong, Sleigh Ride, That's-a-plenty, Ol' Man River, In a Little Spanish Town.

Bing Crosby has a world-wide following, created over many years through his records and films, and later with TV. Radio also played a big part in America. Back catalogue material from hundreds of other artists is doing well on CD. Re-releases of Frank Sinatra from his Capitol days will boost his sales considerably. It is however unlikely that 78rpm tracks going back as far as 1930 and before, other than those made by Crosby, will achieve the wealth-creating sales. Jazz related material might do well within the confines of its followers. There is a whole field of popular artists contemporary to Crosby from the middle 1930s onwards, who have enjoyed back catalogue success on microgroove, who will continue to do so on CD.

We now start counting the Bing Crosby CD Millions!

Yet Crosby is not so far removed from the quarter of a million pounds package essential for the success of today's artists...the videos, the tours: Bing had films and radio to promote his record sales, he was also working in an age where several tracks could be completed in a day! That is not possible today, because of highly skilled technical work required to achieve the sounds demanded by listeners today. Given a time-shift, and there would be Bing.

I wanted to remember Bing's contribution to the industry in this year marking the anniversary of 100 years of recorded sound.

(60 Crosby CDs? Possibly if you count those with only one or two Crosby tracks on them. My figure is in the 30s for <u>complete</u> Bings. BM)

Daily Variety Fifty-Fifth Anniversary Issue

Permanence Of New Disk Formats Should Cue Formation Of A Nat'l Music Archive

By MICHAEL GREENE
(President, National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences, Inc.)

Andy McKaie has spent many hours rummaging through record company archives, and his adventures squirreling around in the vaults illuminate some of the problems in the archival area. McKaie is a producer at MCA Records, who, for the past 18 months, has been specializing in repackaging product from the vast store of previously released material from MCA and its affiliated labels. The material dates from the '20s right up to the rock era. It is essentially the story of our popular music, all filed away, metal and tape.

Sometimes McKaie's experiences in this field of recording archeology are startling. Such as the time he ordered up the original 15-inch reel of a classic session by the late singer, Billie Holiday.

Recalled McKaie:

"Doug Schwartz, my engineer, put up the reel and we are both looking at it as it starts to go around. And we can *see through* the tape! It's very scary when that happens and you have a CD release to produce. I've pulled out one of the Chess (Records) master boxes from the '50s, opened it up and the whole thing literally just went pffft! . . . all over the place. Without me even touching it. It was just poorly stored.

"My goal is to get as much of this stuff on digital, so that it will be there for the future."

Fortunately, McKaie's Billie Holiday story has a happy ending. The sound was fine on the see-through tape and it is now properly transferred to digital.

But the incident with the Chess Records master box perhaps points up the serious need for a nationally organized effort to preserve and protect our national treasury of recordings . . . our music's history.

Record companies are slowly being made aware of the problem. The Recording Industry Association of America's recent grant to the Smithsonian Institution for a music exhibit is an encouraging sign indeed.

40th Anniversary

This year, the 40th anniversary of the birth of the long-playing recording (a true revolution in our industry) was celebrated. The festivities were somewhat low key, due, no doubt, to the fact that the LP does not hold the commanding position in the marketplace it once did. These are the days of the new technologies and the interior real estate in the record stores is being taken over by the compact disk and the cassette, the new kids on the block. And around the corner are the other technologies — DAT, CDI, CDV, CD-ROM, a set of initials that stands a good chance of changing the way we listen to music.

So the celebrations surrounding the four decades of Dr. Peter Goldmark's introduction of the commercial long-playing recording went by largely unnoticed by the industry, including the LP's parent company, CBS Records. After all, it was just a little more than a couple of years ago that companies were cheerfully forecasting the death of vinyl. Extinction in '89 was the rallying cry of those committed to the compact disk surge. (Our industry has never been short of doomsayers. When the cassette was originally introduced, many laughed at its viability, and even Edison considered his invention to have little worth as an entertainment medium!)

But the lack of corporate enthusiasm for the LP's anniversary is fairly standard operating procedure. We belong to an industry that rarely has a committed sense of its own history in the executive boardrooms. The action has always been on what's happening on the charts *next week!*

No Gameplan

It's this lack of a historical sense that I'd like to discuss.

Specifically, the lack within our industry of a carefully considered coordinated effort to set goals and standards for storage, retrieval, research and preservation of American music.

In the same breath, we must also address the issue of where this archive should live. It certainly seems to me that the music industry should create the facility rather than rely on the mega museums to gobble up yet another collection for their already massive "one stop of world history."

I'm not talking about a Rock and Roll Museum. That is certainly a worthy cause, but what I have in mind is a true music resource facility, allowing interactive accessibility with other music resource facilities. A facility for scholars and historians and music lovers.

And now is the time for it.

We have the technology. Recording used to be a frail medium, but not anymore. This is the age of optical and digital storage and retrieval technology. Preservation is a reality with near perfect software, seemingly impervious to decay, systems equipped for storage and retrieval on a scale — and with an ease — unheard of five years ago.

In Andy McKaie's phrase, "It will be there for the future."

This is the solution.

Let's consider the problem.

Wax cylinder, shellac, vinyl, oxide tape — the software previously used to preserve recording's artistry — are all subject to wear, tear and neglect. And this neglect does not only come from the effects of the decay of time, ill-conceived storage facilities, etc. Sometimes the neglect comes from a higher source — the executive office. Human neglect. Much of the art in recording has been stored away in vaults by people who had no particular feeling for the music's validity. This is particularly true of the early recordings in the jazz, blues and country fields.

Much of our recording art is preserved and more — much more — is being done. The advent of the CD has perhaps forced recording companies into a reassessment of their archives, to regard their own history with more care. No longer is it possible to slap together a Greatest Hits package using the most readily available tapes around. CDs require first generation material — those who do not use it are easily found out, as can be witnessed by several recalls of product. And this means that the archival detective and caretaker has assumed a bigger role in the corporate structure than before.

Treasures Lost

The vaults are being opened and examined. And what is being found? It is not a pretty picture.

For another editorial project, the Recording Academy has been talking to several experts devoted to — in producer Orrin Keepnews' elegant phrase — "the preservation of elderly recording."

Keepnews himself is a National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences trustee and owner of Landmark Records. He has also been involved over the years with many archival projects, starting with his own Riverside label. At present, he is locating and restoring some classic jazz product for RCA Records and MCA Records, returning to the vaults to seek out the vintage metal and reels.

"It can be disheartening," he reports. "In too many instances, the original material seems to be unfindable. It is disturbing to be told that part of a 40 or 50-year-old recording session still survives but that the rest seems to have been mislaid, or lost, or crumbled away, or was thrown away.

"Perhaps enlightened self-interest can lead to some properly funded, systematic, industry-wide program of archival research, retrieval, restoration and preservaton of source material.

"Otherwise, a tremendous part of our culture, and of the heritage of the record industry, is going to disappear. The recent technical advances enable us to suspend the passage of time. When old material is transferred to digital tape, it apparently ceases to age. So if we have caught it before the metal parts corrode or the early tape oxidizes too badly, we can probably keep it middle-aged forever, which at least for recorded music is thoroughly acceptable.

"Nothing, however, can really protect against neglect. A terrible toll has already been taken by the many years in which many record companies failed to value early material sufficiently to treat it as anything better than barely tolerated scrap metal."

This theme is echoed by George Simon, writer, music historian, record producer and a NARAS special consultant who recalls his Benny Goodman experience.

"I was working on a special project with Benny when he came up with what we thought was a great idea. 'Let's get hold of those tapes I made with Gene (Krupa), Teddy (Wilson) and Lionel (Hampton) shortly before Gene died, and we'll include some of them,' said Benny.

"So Benny called the major record company in whose studio the sessions had been held and asked for the tapes. 'Sure thing,' they said. 'We'll look for them and send them right over.'

"Well, they did look for them. And they did find them. And Benny rented a recording studio so that we could listen. There were about eight tapes. The first turned out to be a blank. So did the second. So did the third. In fact, all eight of them were blank.

"Benny was astounded and crushed at the same time. These invaluable tapes, holding the last will and testament of the original Goodman Quartet, impeccably recorded in the most modern of equipment, were irrevocably lost! How come? 'We don't know,' said a company rep. 'I guess somebody must have erased them.'

"Too many people in responsible positions, it appears, just couldn't care less when it comes to the preservation of archival material."

Familiar Course

Carelessness of preservation is something that Michael Cuscuna ran into on a recent archival project. Cuscuna is a recording archeologist, digging through the vaults of Blue Note, Capitol, Commodore and World Pacific, as well as running his own mail-order Mosaic Records. He was preparing material for a project involving some classic jazz from the '50s and '60s — the days when tape technology was well established.

"(The record producer) was not a compulsively organized person by any stretch of the imagination. He would take a tune, put it out and then physically remove the master tape from the LP master to put in some anthology. He was splice happy, and if you are pulling out an original master, which is about 20 minutes worth of tape time, it usually took an hour and a half to rewind it the first time. The tape just kept coming apart, you have to pick up the pieces and try to reconstruct it as you go along. A total nightmare."

Such are the experiences of the people working in the vaults and the archives. As I said, not a pretty picture.

But, as previously noted, more is being done and with the arrival of optical storage and digital storage, do we have a bright future? Perhaps . . . but let's look at some disturbing realities.

We are seeing, within our industry, multinationals gobbling up everything from masters to record labels, publishing catalogs to other American intellectual properties. With conglomo-merger fever infecting our business com-

munity, it is clear that their best interests are perhaps the best interests of their stockholders divorced from our industry; thus, a delicate balance might be altered. Perhaps we are bearing witness to the slow poisoning of a perennially endangered species.

Music . . . past and present.

Our recording industry is an almost magical blend of art and business; and for several decades, this coexistence, while occasionally colliding, has worked to mutual advantage. Our industry has managed a beautiful segue of art into commerce, from Caruso to the Beatles, to Run DMC, from Fred Gaisberg to Narada Michael Walden, from Irving Berlin to Stevie Wonder. Even the most obscure, regional and denominational musics have managed to squirrel their way into the divergent superstructure.

But now the delicate balance stands in danger.

Essential recordings, information . . . indeed, true recording history — may become casualties, lost in the mega business. Recording art with no outlet is the proverbial tree falling in the forest with no one to hear or even care.

The parties concerned with these problems have to get together to address the priority of preservation. There is the wherewithal to create this lasting archive. American industry, government and those who truly love music in all its forms must be alerted to this possible tragedy of neglect to our music and recording, and solidify the commitment.

The Nashville-based Country Music Foundation is already working toward this end. With the National Endowment for the Arts and the L. J. Skaggs and Mary J. Skaggs Foundation, they are organizing a conference of major media archives to examine the status of audio recordings, film, tape and manuscripts currently under corporate care.

Bill Ivey, director of the CMF, comments:

"Popular recordings, film, and radio and television programming constitute America's most important contribution to a world culture. It is unreasonable for our society to expect corporations that create audio and visual products to maintain collections of that original material forever. Whenever these collections become too expensive or complex to maintain, we must activate an orderly plan that will allow the transfer of these holdings to the appropriate libraries and archives. We need to develop the structure and the financing of such a plan now.

The Association for Recorded Sound Collections, with a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, recently carried out an 18-month planning study of the status of the preservation of sound recordings.

I have talked with Jerry Gibson, Curator for Film, Television and Recording at the Library of Congress, which currently archives over 2,000,000 recordings and will be meeting later this month to begin a dialog with them.

Something is being done, but it must become an all-industry priority to be identified and fixed, rather than waiting for the multinationals to arrive at our table with their menu, which typically consists of Priority du Jour.

I repeat, too much of our industry's art is being neglected, ignored and forgotten.

We are the first generation to really be presented with this particular problem of music, film and video preservation.

History will stand judgment on our actions.

TIME, DECEMBER 26, 1988

RECORDINGS

Alas, 33⅓ Joins 16 and 78

The long-playing 33⅓-r.p.m. record is suddenly spinning toward antiquity, just like the old 78-r.p.m. platter it replaced back in 1948. LPs hold just 10% of the U.S. market for recorded music, in contrast to 52% for cassettes and 34% for compact discs. In the first half of this year, manufacturers shipped only $303 million in LPs, down 23% from the same period in 1987. Some record labels, including Warner Bros. and EMI, no longer maintain some titles in LP versions. Several classical labels, notably Deutsche Grammophon and CBS Masterworks, sell most new releases only in cassette and CD. In Japan CDs have already captured 50% of the market.

While the 80 million turntables in U.S. homes will ensure a lingering market for LPs, customers may have to scrounge for them on the back shelves of record stores. Says Teddy Allweil, manager of a Record Explosion shop in Manhattan: "After this Christmas, LPs are finished." ■

A new stylus leads the LP fightback

COMPACT discs are slowly, relentlessly, winning the battle against vinyl LPs, but the fantastic black plastic is not going down easily. It's time to update the war report.

In a move that can only be regarded as cheeky, one of America's leading manufacturers of turntables, CTI, has developed a model which dispenses with the normal stylus and cartridge and replaces it with, wait for this, a laser.

The turntable is not digital like the laser-based CD system. What the laser does in this case is to read the groove walls and convert the information they contain into electrical impulses just as a stylus and cartridge does.

But the accuracy of the tracking is far higher — up to 40 times according to CTI.

The new system, if it proves viable, should have several major advantages over conventional turntables. First, records won't wear because nothing will be in contact with the groove walls — they are read by a beam of light. That means that they should retain the lustre they have when just pressed, which can often wear off within the first few dozen plays.

Second, there should be no surface noise from dust and minor manufacturing imperfections, meaning that you should at last be able to play a record without getting clicks and scratches and deep down rumbles.

Finally, the increased accuracy of tracking should result in better, more finely detailed reproduction, even from records that have been knocked around by conventional turntables.

Will this invention save the vinyl LP from obsolescence? Probably not. When landed in Australia, it will likely cost around $6000, making it the province of the desperately committed perfectionist only. Nevertheless, the technology is there and, given volume, the price should come down.

But at its best the system could only equal a CD's performance, it could never do better.

On the CD front there is more news on Tandy's invention of a recordable CD, but it's not good.

Tandy's announcement of the invention last year, which foreshadows a CD deck that you could use like a cassette deck to make perfect digital recordings, caused a flurry of activity among the company's competitors. But, although real progress is being made, there is still no launch date and no sign of the first machine.

The American recording industry is treating the invention exactly the same way as it treated digital audio tape, a concept that is now all but dead. The industry is fighting it tooth and nail.

Just as DAT did, recordable CD promises to make life very lucrative for pirate recording companies which rip off a recording company's big albums and reproduce them in bulk for the black market. They can sell them cheaply because they pay no royalties or recording costs.

If and when recordable CD gets off the ground it's going to be expensive, and the blank discs are probably going to be fairly hefty, too, unless the recording industry can come up with some sort of bulletproof "copy protect" device on its original recordings.

But then, look at all the time and effort the computer software industry put into developing copy protect systems, and where it got them. Copy protected software is very unusual these days, and it was nothing more than consumer pressure which forced so many manufacturers to drop the idea.

So, let's tally up the scoresheet of the battle between vinyl and CD.

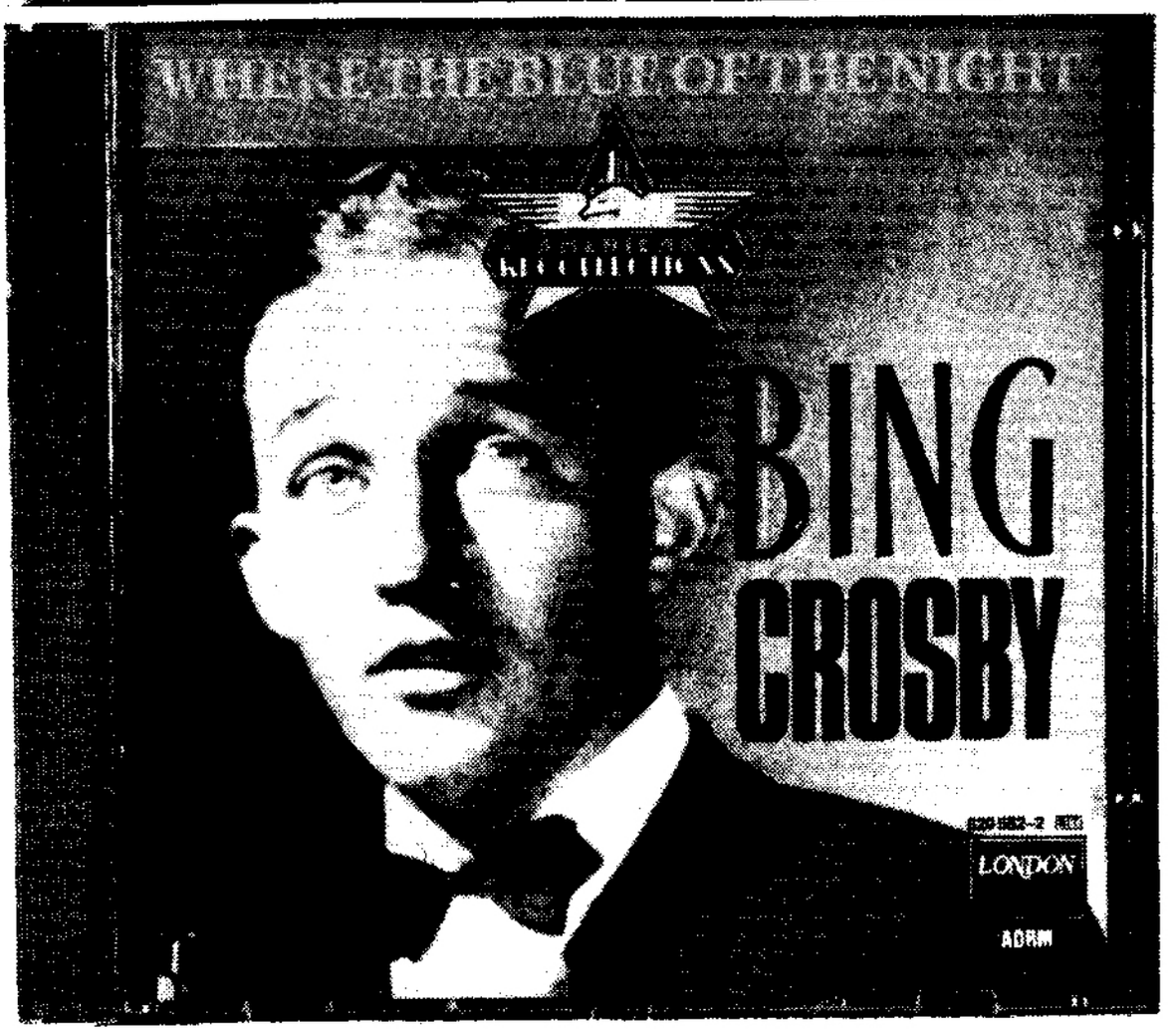
Probably the most telling figures are in the sales of classical music. Classical enthusiasts are usually the ones who spend most on hi-fi, so if there is a hardware trend emerging it usually shows up in the classical sector first, with popular music following a few years later.

Traditional vinyl LPs now account for only 10 per cent of releases from the big classical labels of Philips, Decca and Deutsche Grammophon. Tape cassettes account for a further 20 per cent and all the rest — a massive 70 per cent — are made on CD.

With the imminent release of compact disc video, which adds high quality pictures to the music, CD's market share looks set to increase even further.

It's true that quality turntables are still selling well, but I can't help thinking that they must be being bought by people who want to get their hands on one (to play all their existing LPs well into the future) while they still can.

PAPER
MOON


BING
CROSBY
LONDON

LASERTECH
Easy Listening
THE BING CROSBY COLLECTION
COMPACT disc DIGITAL AUDIO

ROBERT PARKER'S
The Golden Years
IN DIGITAL STEREO
Bing CROSBY

PAPER MOON - PAUL WHITEMAN AND HIS ORCH - PRO-ARTE - CDD437

Just over 60 minutes of vintage Whiteman are squeezed onto this CD, and Bing is well represented throughout including his first track with the King Of Jazz. Now, all we need is someone to put 'I've Got The Girl' onto CD. Probably happen one day.

Contents: If I had a talking picture of you, Wistful and Blue, I'm in love again, When day is done, There ain't no sweet man, Rhythm rag, Muddy Water, The man I love, Lonely melody, You took advantage of me, Mississippi mud, Ol' Man river. Dancing tambourine, It's only a paper moon, Get out and get under the moon, Rockin' chair, Washboard blues, Dardanella.

WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT - LONDON - 820 552-2

The sixteen tracks on this CD must represent some sort of longevity for release. With the exception of only a few years here and there, they have been available virtually continuously since first released in 1931! (See 'Collectors Corner this issue.)

Contents: Blue of the night, Million dollar baby, Sweet and Lovely, I apologise, Stardust, Just one more chance, Too late, Dancing in the dark, A faded summer love, I'm sorry dear, If you should ever need me, Can't we talk it over, Many happy returns of the day, I found you, I'm thru' with love, Goodnight sweetheart.

BING CROSBY 1927 TO 1934 - ABC - 836 172-2
and THE BING CROSBY COLLECTION - LASTERTECH - 944D

Now this is interesting. Both these CDs feature identical contents and in fact, the ABC issue is the CD version of the Robert Parker LP issued a couple of years back. The Lasertech CD was produced by a company named Original Vintage Vintage Productions which is based in New York but the order of the tracks has been rearranged and the sound has been echo-echo-echoed! There are a whole series of the Lastertech discs around town featuring a wide variety of artists, but whether these are pirate issues or legitimately licensed, we cannot say. The cost of the ABC version is $25.00, the Lasertech issue, $9.99!

Contents: Someday sweetheart, Mary, The bluebirds and the blackbirds, I surrender dear, Blue of the night, Please, thanks, The last round-up, St Louis Blues, Black moonlight, Beautiful girl, We'll make hay while the sun shines, Temptation, Dream walking, She reminds me of you, Love in bloom.

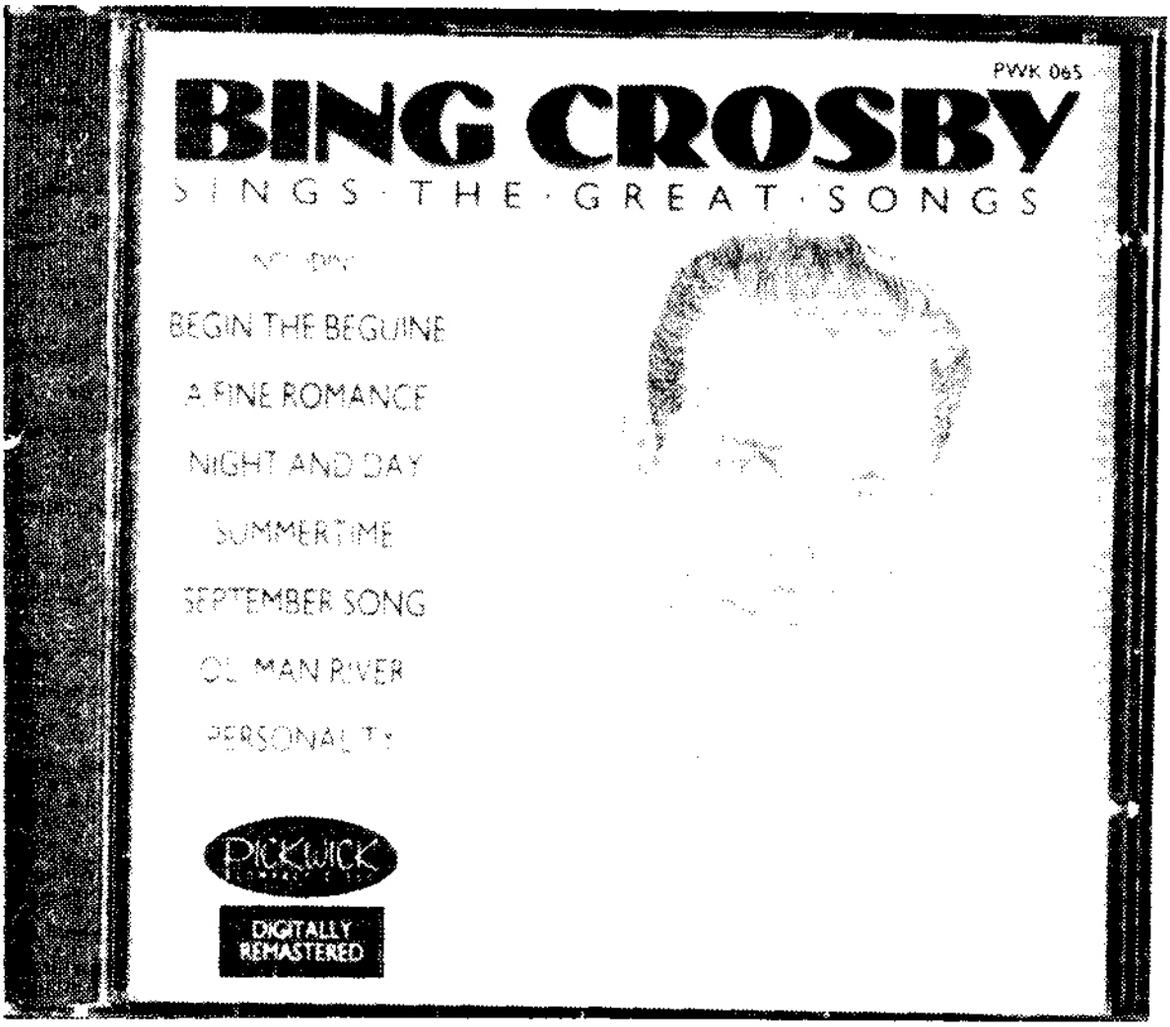
PENNIES FROM HEAVEN - PRO-ARTE - CCD 432

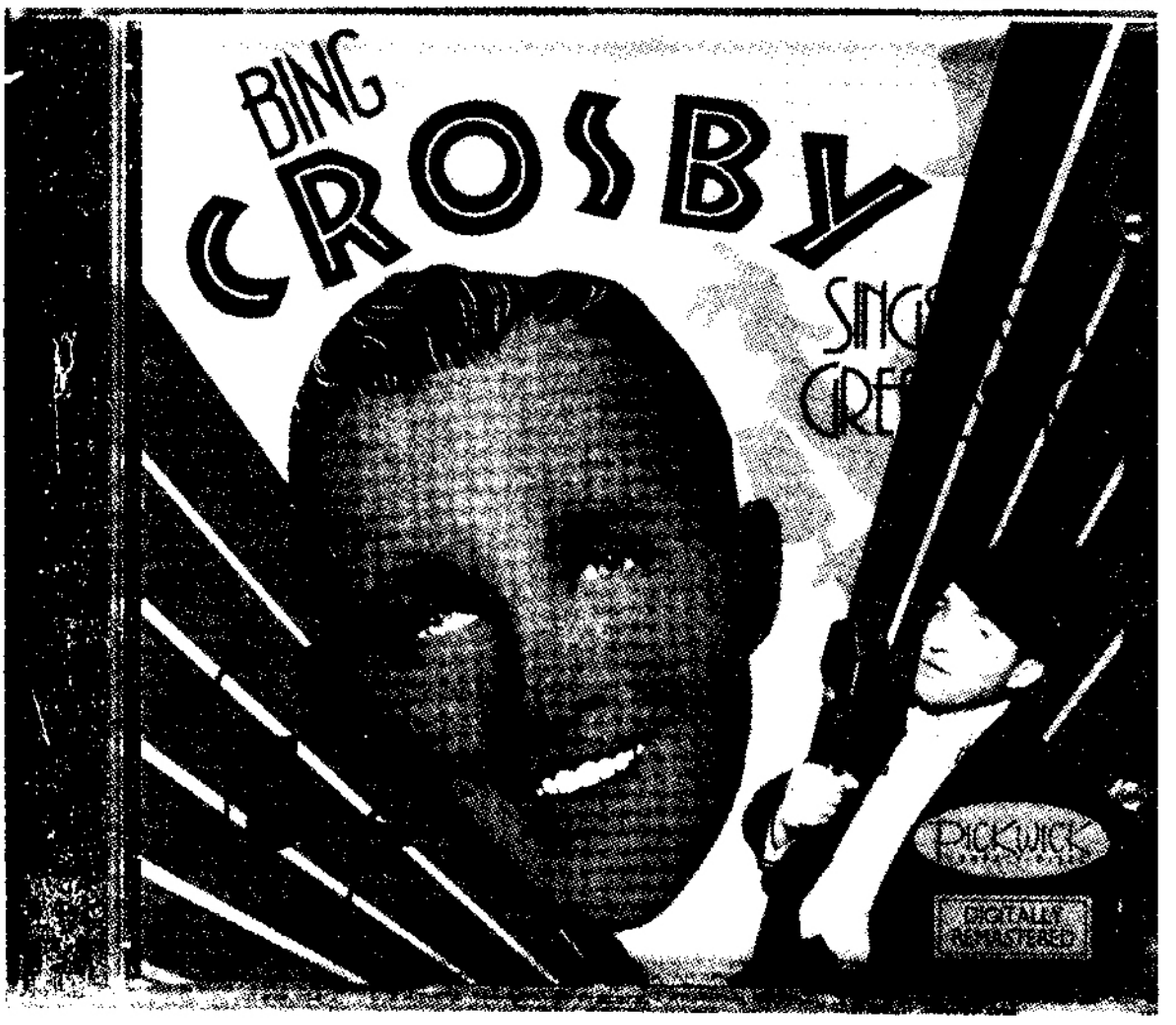
This import CD is widely available around town and features 18 tracks. Well processed too.

Contents: I've got the world on a string, I surrender dear, Just a gigolo, I found a million dollar baby, Just one more chance, Sweet and lovely, Blue of the night (4th time on CD already!) Please, How deep is the ocean, Down the old ox road, Thanks, Black moonlight, Temptation, Dream walking, Love in bloom, June in January, Easy to remember, Pennies from heaven (the version with Satch and Connie Boswell)

PENNIES from HEAVEN
Bing
CROSBY
LOVE IN BLOOM
JUNE IN JANUARY
BLACK MOONLIGHT
SWEET AND LOVELY
JUST A GIGOLO
TEMPTATION

BING CROSBY


PWK 065
BING CROSBY
SINGS · THE · GREAT · SONGS
BEGIN THE BEGUINE
A FINE ROMANCE
NIGHT AND DAY
SUMMERTIME
SEPTEMBER SONG
OL' MAN RIVER
PERSONALITY
PICKWICK
DIGITALLY REMASTERED


BING CROSBY
PICKWICK
DIGITALLY REMASTERED

HOLIDAY INN - MCA - MCAD-25205
Is this the first of the entire 'Bing's Hollywood' series to be reissued or is it the only one so treated, to tie in with Irving Berlin's 100th birthday last year and also Fred Astaire's passing? Fingers crossed. This recording from the USA is also available on LP and cassette.

Contents: Happy holiday, Be careful it's my heart, Abraham, Easter Parade, Song of Freedom, I Can't tell a lie, Lazy, I'll capture your heart, I've got plenty to be thankful for, You're easy to dance with, White Christmas, Let's start the new year right.

BING CROSBY SINGS THE GREAT SONGS - PICKWICK - PWK 065
This 16 track CD from the UK is reputed to have sold 45,000 copies there. Does that mean we can add a further 720,000 record sales to Bing's total and what in fact will all these CD reissues add to the figure? (See 'Bing's Microgroove Millions' elsewhere in this issue.)

Contents of this CD vary from that of the LP of the same name (in fact, only a handful of tracks are duplicated).

Contents: Begin the beguine, A fine romance, Night and day, I've got you under my skin, Who's sorry now, On the sunny side of the street, Swinging in a star, Stardust, These foolish things, Danny boy, Summertime, Personality, Pennies from heaven, Memories are made of this. September song, Ol' Man river.

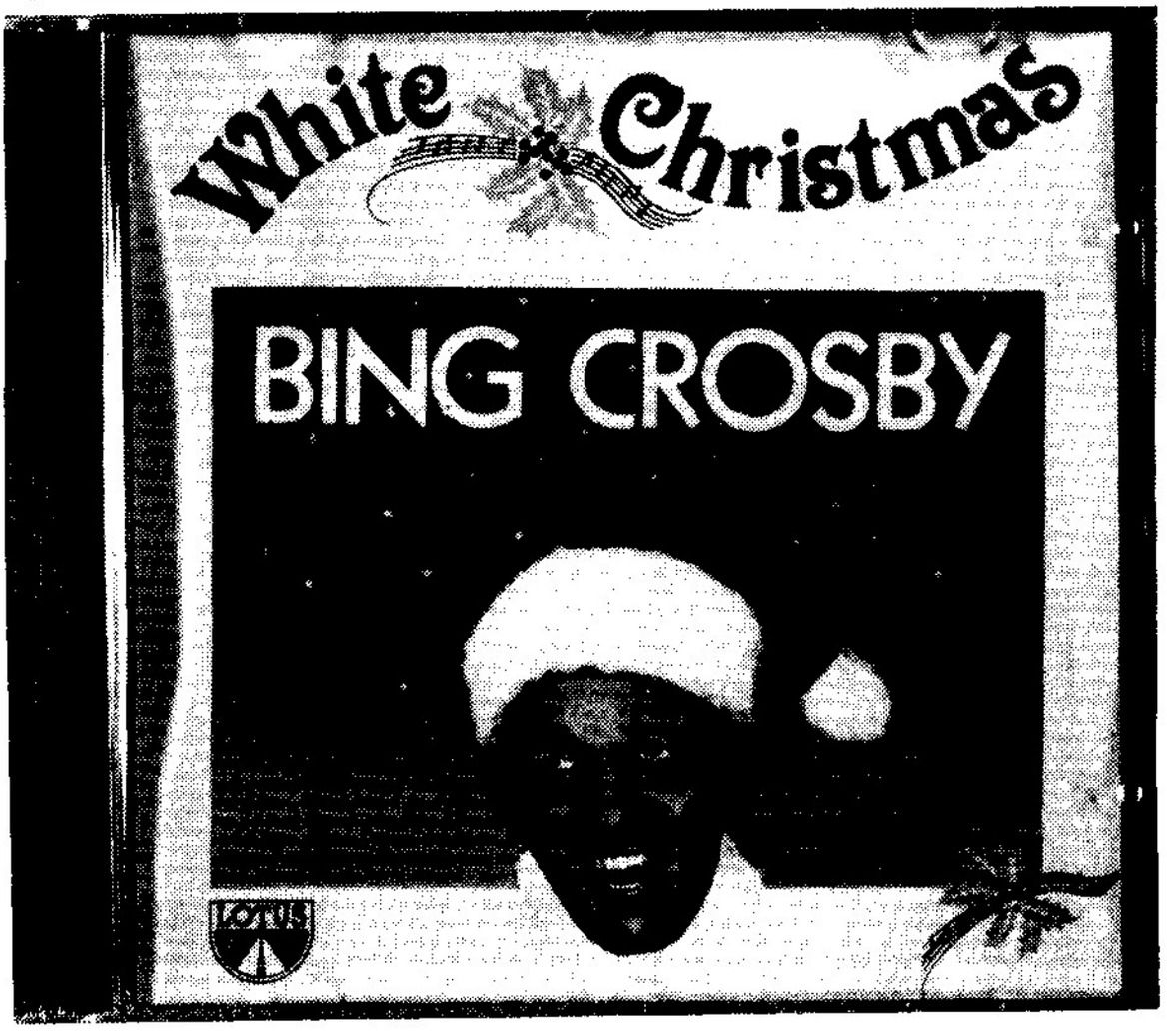
BING CROSBY SINGS MORE GREAT SONGS - PICKWICK - PWK 088
The first CD was so successful in the UK that it spawned a follow-up. I believe that certain prominent British collectors had some influence on the contents which are not your everyday re-releases.

Contents: There's no business like show business, Secret love, Stranger in paradise, Ac-cent-tchu-ate the positive, I'll be seeing you, I love Paris, People will say we're in love, They can't take that away from me, You must have been a beautiful baby, A nightingale sang, You made me love you, Red sails in the sunset, Wrap your troubles in dreams, Georgia on my mind, Autumn leaves.

BING CROSBY'S GREATEST HITS - MCAS - 1620
This old warhorse from the USA is identical to the LP which has been around for as long as we can remember. Still, it's nice to see it on CD.

Contents: White Christmas, The whiffenpoof song, I surrender dear, Blue skies, Pistol packin' mama, Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, Ac-cent-tchu-ate the positive, Don't fence me in, You are my sunshine, Swinging on a star, Deep in the heart of Texas, Blue of the night.

Bing Crosby's Greatest Hits


White Christmas
BING CROSBY

the radio years
GNPD-9051
BING CROSBY
20
SONGS
WITH
ROSEMARY CLOONEY, THE ANDREWS SISTERS
HELEN O'CONNELL, LAUREN BACALL
DICK POWELL and GARY CROSBY

THE
BEST
OF
BING
CROSBY
Includes
WHITE CHRISTMAS
PENNIES FROM HEAVEN
amongst 20 Crosby Classics

HIGH
SOCIETY
ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK - Words & Music by COLE PORTER

LONDON
ADRM
Feels Good Feels Right
Recorded in London

WHITE CHRISTMAS - LOTUS - CD50001
White Christmas has turned up on several CDs already (not really surprising) and there are at least three Crosby Christmas CDs out. This one is available in Melbourne for about $16.00 so I picked it up.

Contents: White Christmas, Jingle Bells, Silver bells, Silent night, Mele Kalikimaka, Adeste Fidelis, God rest ye merry gentlemen, I'll be home for Christmas, Santa Claus is coming to town, Too-ra-loo-ral (this is a Christmas song?). It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas, Faith of our fathers, Christmas in Killarney, Galway Bay (begorrah!).

THE RADIO YEARS - GNP CRESCENDO - GNPD 9051 and 9052
These two CDs from the USA contain excellently re-processed radio tracks from the 1940s and 50s. In total, 45 songs which have been around before on LP but it is nice to have them on CD. Too many to list here.

THE BEST OF BING CROSBY - MCA - DMCL 1607
The UK release trots out Bing's 20 most famous songs, but we shouldn't complain.

Contents: Blue of the night, Swinging on a star, You are my sunshine, It's been a long long time. Macnamara's band, Sweet lelani, I'm an old cowhand, Pennies from heaven, Don't fence me in, White Christmas, Mexicali rose, The whiffenpoof song, I can't begin to tell you, Play a simple melody, Dear hearts and gentle people, Galway bay, Cool cool cool of the evening, Too-ra-loo-ra-loo-ral, Sam's song, Now is the hour.

HIGH SOCIETY - CEDE INTERNATIONAL - CD 66056
I haven't a clue who was behind this reissue but it certainly wasn't Capitol Records! I may be mistaken, but I thought that I detected surface noise on the CD, which of course is impossible, unless the contents was transcribed off an LP. Unthinkable, or is it? Whilst in a record shop a few weeks back, I bumped into a representative of one of the record companies who said that he would love to have a digitally-reprocessed version on CD for sale - he could sell heaps! Apparently there is some kind of contractual problem why High Society has not been officially re-released. I've heard that this version is for sale around town although I've not seen it. No point listing the contents.

FEELS GOOD FEELS RIGHT - LONDON - 820 586-2
Nice to have some of Bing's later work on CD, especially this one as it includes three tracks that were never issued until several years after Bing's death and then only in the UK.

Contents: Feels good feels right, Once in a while, As time goes by, Old fashioned love, Time on my hands, The way we were, There's nothing that I haven't sung about, The night is young and you're so beautiful, Nevertheless, The rose in her hair, What's new?, When I leave the world behind PLUS That old black magic, I'm getting sentimental over you, At Last.

JUST BREEZIN' ALONG - EMI - CDP 7 48272 2

Another welcome reissue, especially as this one is available in Melbourne. This CD features 16 tracks from Bing's recordings for United Artists in the mid-1970s.

The contents: Breezin' along with the breeze, How are things in Glocca Morra, Heat wave, The best things in life are free, My heart stood still, I got rhythm, The good old times, Cabaret, Send in the clowns, The only way to go, Have a nice day, Some sunny day, At my time of life, With a song in my heart, Razzle dazzle, That's what life is all about.

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IN CASE YOU WERE WONDERING, THERE STILL ARE LPS BEING ISSUED TOO!

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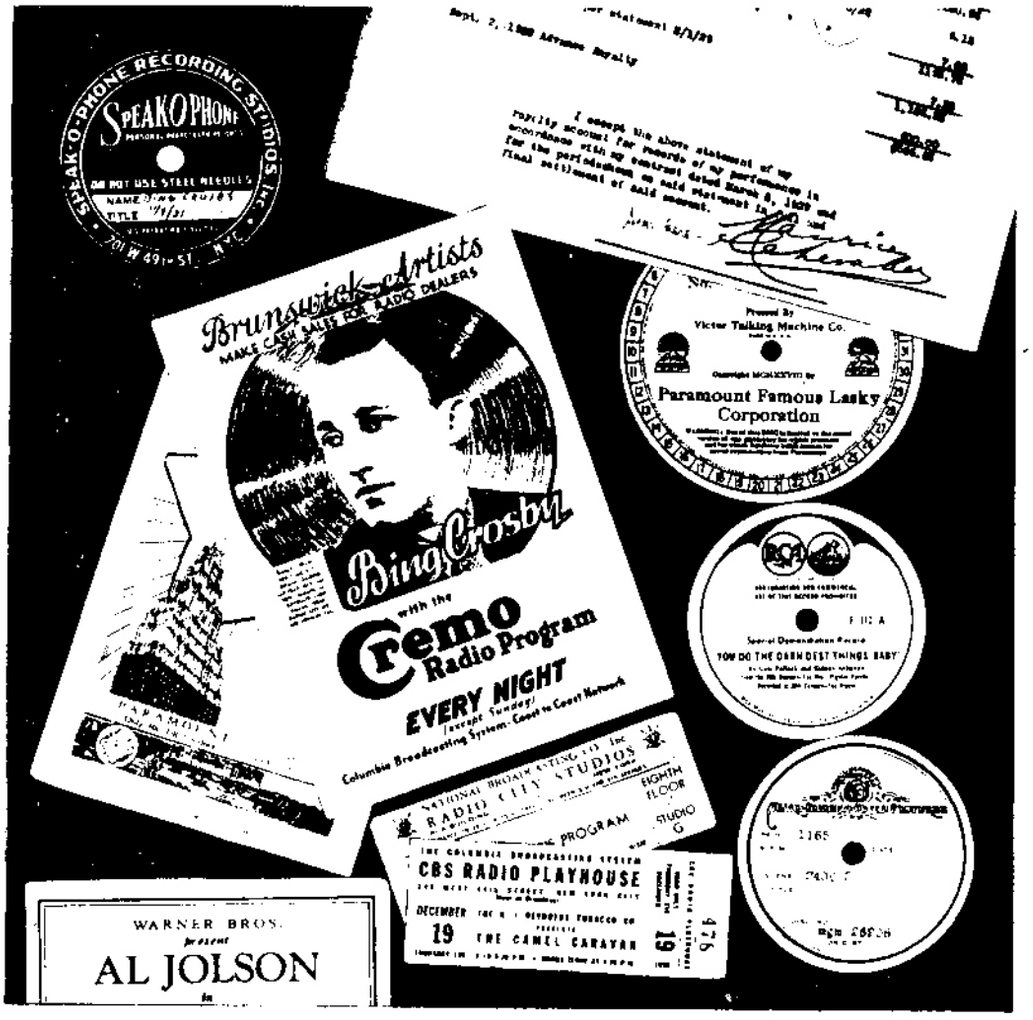

PERSONALITIES ON PARADE VOLUME 2 - PP2

This long-awaited sequel to Vol 1 in the series features, among other pleasures, a complete 1931 broadcast featuring Bing. Actually the seventh of Bing's Cremo broadcasts, we hear Bing singing 'Now That You're Gone', 'This Is the Missus' and 'Goodnight Sweetheart'. There's also an orchestra spot 'Hiding In the Shadows of the Moon'. Of course the standout track is Bing singing 'This Is the Missus' which he handles in true 1931 style. However, there is a downside to the recording. The quality is, to put it kindly, atrocious. The best description is to imagine that you are listening to the original broadcast standing under a tin roof during a hailstorm! But we shouldn't really criticise, especially as there are no 'alternate' takes available. In fact, we are highly grateful to John Newton for reproducing this rare broadcast on LP. No matter how bad the sound, it deserves to be preserved. (In Vol 3, due out mid-year, there is something really special to look forward to - Bing and the Mills Brothers in a 1934 radio version of Nagasaki.)

Other tracks on Vol 2: Ethel Merman (He reminds me of you), Tony Martin (You do the darn'dest things, baby), Gracie Allen (Snug as a bug in a rug), Van & Schenk (He's that kind of pal), Maurice Chevalier (Gonna get a girl), Claudette Colbert (Give me liberty or give me love), Eddie Cantor (Calabash pipe [3 takes]), Al Jolson (Oh Suzanna, dust off your old pianna).

THE CHRONOLOGICAL BING CROSBY - VOL 11 - JONZO (JZ-11)

Again, John McNicholas has done a wonderful job in putting together the latest in his 'Chronological' series. A real bonus is Bing's first 1931 broadcast in which he sings two songs, 'Just one more chance' and 'I'm thru with love'. I'm glad that John has also included the voice of announcer Frank Knight - it adds so much atmosphere.

Other tracks on the disc, all commercial issues: I'm thru with love, Many happy returns of the day, I found a million dollar baby, At your command (takes A & B), I apologize, Dancing in the dark, Star dust, Sweet and Lovely, Now that you're gone, A faded summer love, Too late, Goodnight sweetheart.

As usual, John has illustrated the fold-out cover with rare sheet music and photographs including one I've not seen before featuring Bing and Lillian Roth.

I can't urge you too strongly to buy these records when they appear. You'll kick yourself one day if you miss out now. Just ask any collector who, over the years has let slip the opportunity to pick up a disc they thought they could always get 'later'. It just doesn't work out like that!

DER BINGLE - VOL 5 - SPOKANE 32

We mentioned last issue that Larry Kiner had issued several new Crosby LPs. Here's one of them featuring WWII tracks from radio. That's a great cover from Joe Sinnott although I'm a little worried about the position of the gun in the hand of the soldier at centre left. Come to think of it, all the tracks on this LP are from 'Command Performance' shows.

The contents: My darling Clementine, Stardust, You are my sunshine, Abraham, Miss you, Great day, As time goes by, It can't be wrong, I never mention your name, Sunday Monday or always, On moonlight bay, Swinging on a star, Long ago and far away, You must have been a beautiful baby.

The disc also features cover notes from Bob Hope dated January 1987, although it's hard to tell whether Hope actually wrote these for the album or they were taken from somewhere else.

Der Bingle Vol 5 is available, like all Spokane releases, from Redmond Nostalgia Company, PO Box 82, Redmond, Washington 98073-0082, USA.

THROUGH THE YEARS VOLUME 4 - LIMITED EDITION CLUB - JGB 1009
This indispensable disc features another 14 tracks which have never been reissued on LP. Mostly from the early 1950s (with only two exceptions), this privately-produced record lives up to the high expectations of previous issues. I believe that another two similiar discs are all that will be required before the project is complete. i.e. To have at least one take of all Crosby 78s not on long play reissued in that form.

The contents: Looks Like a Cold Cold Winter (8.9.50), The First Snowfall (22.11.55), Little Jack Frost Get Lost (17.11.52), Sleigh Bell Serenade (12.11.52), Sleigh Ride (17.11.52), Angel Bells (1.6.55), Poppa Santa Claus (7.9.50), Blue Shadows and White Gardenias, We All Have a Song in Our Hearts (9.2.51), So Would I (22.8.46), More I Cannot Wish You (7.2.51), Sentimental Music (2.2.51), Oh! Tell Me Why (28.4.54), I Will Remember You (5.9.50).

BING AND DINAH - SPOKANE 31

I particularly enjoyed this disc which features more WWII tracks, this time with Bing partnering Dinah Shore. Side 1 features Command Performance broadcast #97 from December 19, 1943 in which Bing and Dinah (and occasionally Ken Carpenter) sing a couple of song medleys: Over there, Mr Carpenter & Mr Crosby, Basin St Blues, Mr Crosby & Miss Dinah, How deep is the ocean, I'm an old cowhand, San Antonio Rose, Home on the range, Empty saddles, Shoo shoo baby. Medley 2: Little brown jug, When you wore a tulip, Put your arms around me honey, Pistol packin' mama, I can't give you anything but love, Blues in the night, Jim, White Xmas, I'll see you in my dreams, Lover come back to me, Little brown jug.

Side 2 features two more medleys: One dozen roses, sleepy lagoon, Put on your old grey bonnet, Blues in the night, Honeysuckle rose, Deep purple, Only forever, 3 little words, You're always in my heart. Medley 2: Margie, Tangerine, Somebody else is taking my place, I love you truly, Conchita Marquita Lopez, Apple blossom time, Basin St blues, Dear mom, Blues in the night, Easter Parade.

There are even a couple of solos: It's a long way to Tipperary, It ain't necessarily so, Summertime.

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OTHER NEW RELEASES

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There are a couple more CDs which I haven't received yet from the USA. One on Columbia is called CROSBY CLASSICS and although I don't know the contents, I would not be surprised if it were our old friend from the 1950s which is still around on LP and which features a dozen or so of Bing's best selling records from 1932-33.

Capitol in the USA have issued a CD called CHRISTMAS CLASSICS which inexplicable features only 10 of the 12 tracks which Bing recorded for an LP back in the early 60s. For the record, Cat No is CDP 91002 2 and the contents is Winter wonderland, Have yourself a merry little Xmas, What child is this/Holly & the Ivy, Little drummer boy, O Holy night, The littlest angel, Let it snow, Hark! the herald angels sings/It came upon a midnight clear, Frosty the snowman, I wish you a merry Christmas. But why leave off two tracks?

'Mr Nostalgia', PO Box 29494, Tampa, Florida 33320, USA has several Crosby records for sale: Saville #190 'Easy to remember' (I think 78s from 1931-36), JRC #1400 'The Bing Crosby Show' (Bing 1940s KMH show with Lucille Ball and Groucho), Loota #4091 'The Edsel Show' (1957 TV soundtrack with Rosie Clooney, Frank Sinatra and Louis Armstrong).

Mr Nostalgia has also issued a 4LP set featuring 57 of Hoagy Carmichael's best songs as performed by a variety of artists (jazz biased). Bing is on two tracks (Moonburn and Cool of the evening). Recordings would seem to date from the 1920s to the 50s and the entire set comes with a well-illustrated 64 page book. Sounds like a good issue. Cost $US42.00 which includes shipping (maybe more for overseas).

A copy called Good Music Record Co, PO Box 909, Paramus. NL 07653-0909, USA have put out a double LP of Bing's Decca Hawaiian recordings. In total, 24 tracks. On two LPs or cassettes for $US12.98. Postage probably extra.

IN AUSTRALIA, GET YOUR CROSBY RECORDS FROM KEN HENDERSON, ABC RECORDS, 349 CENTRE RD, BENTLEIGH, VICTORIA 3205. (Tel: 557 1050)

FOR RECORDS KEN CAN'T SUPPLY, DEREK PARKES, 66 FIRS RD, FIRSDOWN, SALISBURY, WILTS SP5 1SW, ENGLAND. Derek supplied me with most of the CDs featured in this issue. Highly recommended.

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NEXT PAGE: NOT ALL THE REVIEWS OF THE THREE CD SET 'THE CROONER' WERE GOOD!

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Los Angeles Times Friday, November 11, 1988

CD CORNER

From the Bottom of the Bing Crosby Barrel

By TERRY ATKINSON

In the history of recorded music, three male pop singers stand above all others: Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley. Like Presley, but unlike Sinatra, Crosby was at his best during the early years of his career—when he was an innovative pop *and* jazz vocalist.

However, until now that period has not been chronicled on compact disc—which means that the new "The Crooner: The Columbia Years 1928-1934," should be a blessing for fans, especially since it's a three-CD set (also available in three-cassette and four-LP versions) containing 65 recordings.

Instead, it's a big disappointment.

Incredibly, "The Crooner" includes *none* of the tracks from the three previously released, vinyl-only Columbia albums that concentrated on the best Crosby performances from the period: the two superb, double-disc collections "The Bing Crosby Story, Volume I: The Early Jazz Years" and "The Bing Crosby Story, Volume II: The Hollywood Years," and "Paul Whiteman and His Orchestra: Featuring Bing Crosby." (RCA also has put out several albums from this period, none yet on CD.)

"The Crooner" *does* offer alternate-take recordings of a few of the songs contained on those LPs. However, it mainly consists of tracks from the three *worst* albums Columbia ever put out chronicling this portion of Bing's career.

Those were the three volumes called "A Bing Crosby Collection," released in the late '70s as a vault-clearing follow-up to the previously released anthologies—and admittedly dealing with lesser material (plus a few gems like the powerfully grim "I've Got to Pass Your House" and the majestic 1933 version of "Home on the Range").

Collector Michael Brooks, who put together and annotated the new collection and the three sub-par LPs (but not the earlier ones) admitted in the liner notes to one of the LPs that it "might be subtitled 'The Bottom of the Barrel.' " Also in those liner notes, Brooks ridiculed many of the songs, and the ridicule usually fit: Crosby often

Bing Crosby in 1932 photo.

was handed fourth-rate material that a producer thought might appeal to the lowest-denominator taste of the record-buying public.

For every forget-me-not from the time Bing had to sing a forget-me-please like "Little Dutch Mill" and "We're a Couple of Soldiers." Unfortunately, Brooks makes exactly this mediocre material the focus of the first Columbia early-Crosby CD release. Almost every song from these three "bottom-of-the-barrel" LPs is included on the new collection.

Of course, CD/Crosby fans could simply skip purchasing the set and wait for a better one—if it weren't for the fact that "The Crooner" *also* contains several top-grade performances that have only been available on English collections and small U.S. labels like Biograph, Sunbeam and Jazum: the Boswell Sisters-Don Redman collaboration "Lawd, You Made the Night Too Long," the Mills Brothers collaboration "Shine," and above all—"Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?," "Street of Dreams" (oddly titled "On a Street of Dreams" here) and "Blue Prelude," three Depression songs that showcase Crosby's phrasing at its most moving, plus "Some of These Days," a stirring example of Bing's jazz touch.

Crosby aficionados too will want the collection for the previously unreleased alternate takes of "Learn to Croon," "I've Got the World on a String" and others, though they're sometimes inferior to the better-known takes.

On the other hand, they may find it hard to believe that Brooks and producer Joe McEwen could not include one single Rhythm Boys (the wonderful group Crosby sang in during the Whiteman period) cut, or at least three or four tracks from the "Hollywood" album, or the "Jazz Years" LP. or. . .

(Reached by phone in his New York office, McEwen said Brooks "came to me with the idea of doing it this way" and he went along with the plan "because Michael's the Crosby expert." McEwen confirmed that Brooks could have included tracks from the better collections if he had wanted to. "But it may turn out for the best" that he didn't, said McEwen, because the two "Story" LPs are "self-contained" and, since they were each two-disc vinyl sets, might make excellent-value one-CD releases. McEwen felt chances were good that those LPs will get their digital remastering "before too long." The current CD set "may seem like we're doing things backwards," but the producer indicated that Columbia will make a real effort to get all of the company's first-class early-Bing recordings on CD.)

"The Crooner" comes with extensive liner notes by Brooks. However, most of them are simply repeated from the "Collection" series—which results in at least one misstatement: his assertion that "Here Is My Heart" appears "on a Crosby collection for the first time." To that embarrassment Brooks adds new ones: "Hardly any jazz was recorded in 1932 . . ." he begins one blurb (and he's talking about *all* recording, not just Crosby's!).

But the main problem is the emphasis on inferior early Crosby when so much superior early Crosby has not yet reached CD. Many listeners will be hearing the young Bing for the first time here, and will get the impression that he sang primarily dreck—especially since the liner notes give the impression that the collection *is* representational.

"One really should draw a merciful veil over this number," Brooks writes in one of his repeated notes (of "What Do I Care, It's Home") Too bad he didn't take his own advice.

AT&T saved, not ruined, the Clambake

BRUCE MEADOWS

PEBBLE BEACH — Has it been long enough now?

If we say it real quietly, almost as if by accident . . . and not too often, is it OK?

You know . . . the "C" word. Crosby.

The last Bing Crosby Pebble Beach National Pro-Am was held in 1985. But the tournament was floundering financially, facing the prospect of not being able to offer enough loot to the touring pros.

The pros all tell you how great the golf courses are on the Monterey Peninsula, but the bottom line is money. The Crosby was getting a little light.

To keep the purse high would have meant giving less to local charities. Bing's sons, Nathaniel and Harry, couldn't do that.

The only hope was corporate support, as it has been in many other PGA events, and AT&T stepped in. Bing's widow, Kathryn, felt the tournament would lose its identity, so she took the Crosby name with her to North Carolina, where it now adorns a celebrity pro-am that the PGA and not too many other people care much about.

But despite what some people would have you believe, AT&T was not the bad guy . . . that label only applies when I get my phone bill at the end of the month.

• • •

AT&T bailed out the Crosby and, company spokesmen claim they would have incorporated the Crosby name had Kathryn not prohibited them from doing so.

This year Nathaniel didn't even play here. He works for a golf club manufacturer and was at a trade show.

But every year the same questions persist: Is the tournament different now? Will the Crosby name ever return? Does anybody care if it ever returns?

The first year, the "C" word was taboo. If a pro mentioned it at a press conference, he'd get a sheepish look, blush a little . . . "Oops, I mean AT&T," he'd mumble.

AT&T personnel would clear their throats, sigh and stare straight ahead. Time . . . it would take time.

Well, now it's the third AC&C (After Crosby & his Clambake) and people are still making the same mistake. Only now the corporate guys are a little more understanding. And the pros are a little less cautious.

Dave Stockton, who has played in the Pebble Beach event for 25 years, referred to it as the Crosby several times. When he realized his mistake, he said: "OK . . . let's put it this way. I've played here 25 times — two AT&Ts and 23 Crosbys. How's that?"

Does it make any difference to the players? The older ones still call it the Crosby, the newer ones call it Pebble Beach or the AT&T.

So, despite the fact that the word Crosby is tough to find anywhere during the tournament — while the AT&T logo is on just about everything but the toilet paper — you can call it anything you want.

Over the past three seasons, I've asked a number of pro golfers, young and old, their feelings about the name change. It was interesting to note that just about all of them were aware of Bing's involvement. The name? Most of them think people make more out of it than they should.

I once asked Ben Crenshaw, at age 37 sort of a young elder statesman on the Tour, what the players called it when they were together, away from the PGA brass.

"I think we usually call it the Crosby . . . but to tell you the truth, I don't think it matters much. It's Pebble Beach."

OK, then the name change is no big deal. Has the tournament itself changed since AT&T took over sponsorship?

• • •

The first year, I couldn't really put a finger on it. The second year I felt I could.

While the tournament continues to draw big-name celebrities — and probably more athletic stars than ever before — there seems to be a lot more corporate participants.

In past years, spots were filled with Bing's old friends — or friends of old friends. Sometimes guys you thought you knew, maybe somebody you'd seen as the bartender in a western movie, or some lounge entertainer you half-listened to the last time you were in Reno.

Now, it seems more like it's Joe Smith, third vice president for some big-name corporation. And maybe a few of *his* old friends.

Perhaps — and this is just a feeling — it doesn't look as if as many people are having as good a time as they did in the past. For better or worse, things aren't quite as loose.

Don't get me wrong. Players say things are done first-cabin at this PGA stop. Even the free-loading press doesn't seem to whine as much as in years past.

The tournament is run extremely well. It's very well-organized.

No seat-of-the-pants operation here. One might even be tempted to say it's run like, well, a corporation.

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COLLECTORS PROFILES - WILLIAM R. OSBORN

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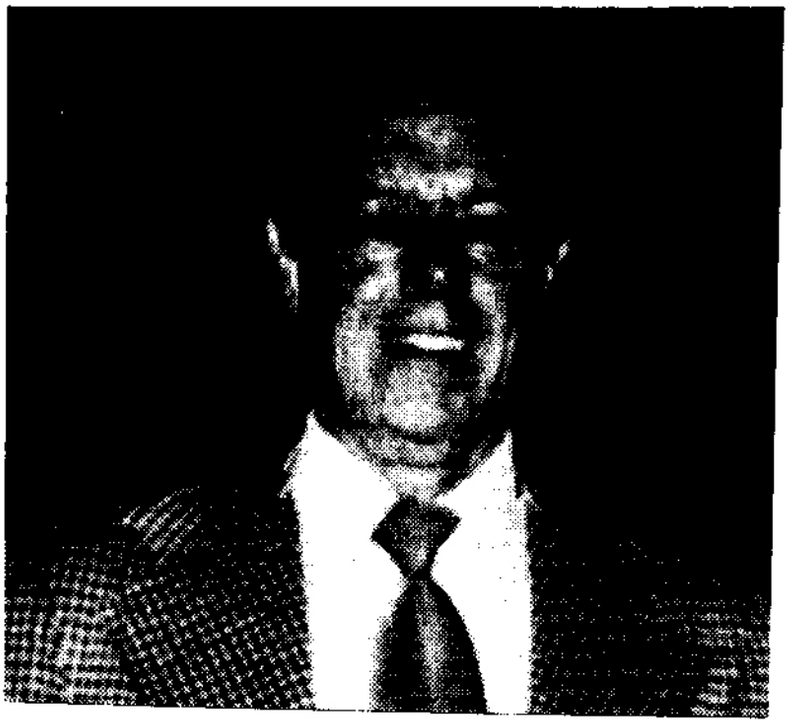

by Vern Taylor

If the word 'discrete' were a word commonly used, it would come in handy in writing a monograph like this on Mr William R. Osborn, since he is, without a doubt, a man of many parts. To look at him is to see a tall, rangy individual who wears a serious, penetrating expression most of the time. He wipes it off easily and quickly, however, whenever anyone (as they said in my youth) gives him a tumble. In fact, he would be the first to pick up on the little double-entendre just used here and embellish it with a very quick rejoinder. Contradictory in his own way; off-putting, sharp witted, warm hearted, hard headed are but a few of the qualities that go to make up his discrete personality.

This quiet man with the long arms and delicate hands hides more than he shows, but what you see is only the beginning of what you get. He, as it happens, is one of the more prominent Bing Crosby collectors and can be counted on your ten fingers as one of the USA's top 'Bingophiles' (a word he must detest). All Crosby's gramophone records, all the radio and television programs (except the lost ones) are in his collection, and they are on dozens of labels, types, sizes, releases, along with thousands of reels of tape. Besides the films and guest-appearances in all the media, huge numbers of the private and off-the-cuff material can be found is his especially constructed, beautiful cabinets. They dwell with him in his home as family members, loved and cared for. Bing is wondrously served.

Since a lad, when he began gleefully amassing his precious hoard, he listens to parts of it everyday. His is not an idle, locked-away treasure but one used with abiding gratitude for the many good things it has done

for him. Among other things, it gave him his professional start in life. He likes to tell how he got into radio by carrying armloads of Crosby records down to a local radio-station for aiplay and so being offered his first job as a disc-jockey. After an audition, the station-manager said, "I like you Bill and I like the way you use your voice. You have a gentle, effective way with it. You can have a future in broadcasting if you want it."

Osborn spent most of his life earning more than announcing would have paid him, recently retiring as an assistant department-head in Washington for one of the country's largest bank-chains. Still he continued working in radio. It has been estimated that he has performed a greater number of broadcasts on the singer than anyone else. Year in and year out, in the USA and Canada, he tributes number in the many hundreds. His wide following would probably let it be known if he did not come over their loudspeakers regularly.

More than this and frequent television appearances, Bill functions as master-of-ceremonies for various social activities, such as club-dates, church-benefits, special gatherings of large parties in Seattle's business community and he is also the perennial host for the annual Tribute observance of the Bing Crosby Historical Society as well as serving as one of its board members. He even leaves town yearly to do similiar chores in the San Francisco Bay Area for the meetings of the Bing's Friends and Collector's Society. For those among us who are content to remain in the closet merely spinning our Bing records, Osborn is a stunning example of returning favour for favour. "Bing was always good for me", he once told this writer. "He was not only instrumental in my getting started, he also made it possible for me to live a full, rich life.

Along the way, he was able to meet several members of Crosby's family several times and, more than once, interviewed them for broadcast and for publication. Since his retirement, he continues his odyssey, travelling even to distant places, collecting data on the singer's great career: Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Washington D.C. and America's huge Middlewest. Having journeyed around the world more than once, one can easily imagine him seeking Bing-material wherever he roamed.

A mutual friend, Lilian Clements, a sister of Dick Todd, the 'Canadian Bing Crosby', told me after a lengthy interview, "Mr Osborn is a true Victorian gentleman." It is not certain that he was precisely overwhelmed by this compliment. He prefers to regard himself as a sort of fast-moving, even racy character with a quip for any occasion. Actually, he is both and he is others, besides. As far as the loose federation of Bing Crosby collectors are concerned, he has been a friend indeed, since many items in our own collections came first from or through his generosity. This is a benchmark of a genuine British influenced collector. "They taught us all that Crosby collecting is a friendly game and not a sharpie's bag of tricks." He is right.

Yes, he appears quiet and full of dignity in private but behaves like a jokesmith and raconteur before an audience...much like Bing, himself. Discrete, that is the word for Bill Osborn.

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COLLECTORS PROFILES - ARNOLD BAKER

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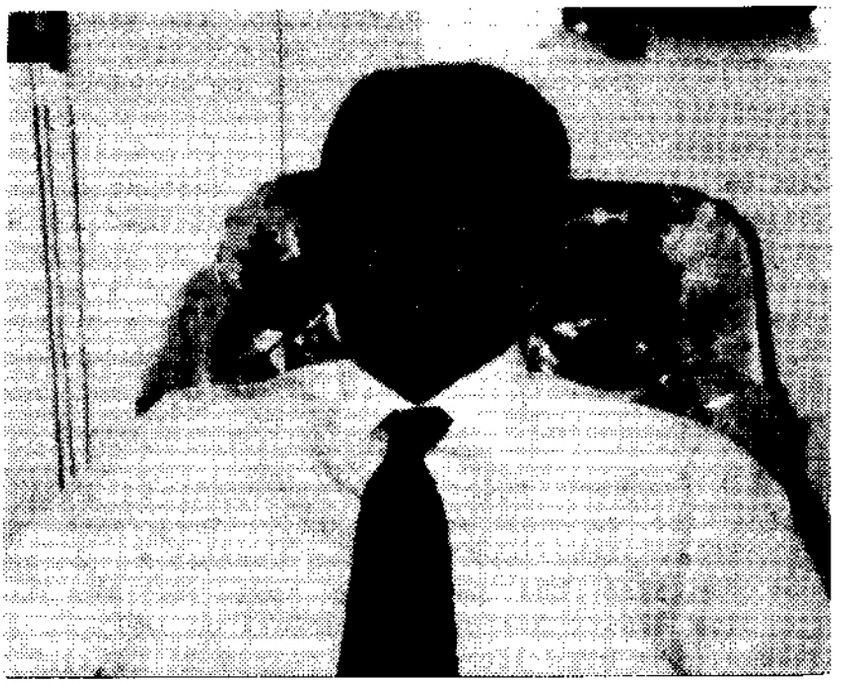


By Keith Parkinson

Arnold Baker's name is known the world over by Crosby collectors because for over ten years, he was the guiding force behind what was known as 'Tapes Exclusive'. That Northern Ireland base for Bing goodies distributed the Bing voice to the four corners of the globe. Arnold's files show that every continent on earth as a 'tapes exclusive' recipient. With several thousand tapes being despatched, a lot of readers will have sampled Arnold's professionally compiled cassettes at some time or other. Sadly, his taping activities have had to be severely curtailed in recent times because of a bout of ill health, but not before many Crosby collections were enhanced because of Arnold's help.

Like many of us, Arnold's interest in Bing can be traced back to late childhood. Born in Muswell Hill, London, he grew up in a home where older brothers and sisters bought and played Crosby records, and by the beginning of the forties, he was a collector. In 1941, he became a signalman in the Royal Navy, earning two shillings a day and saving as much as possible towards buying 78s at 5s 4d each in neighbourhood Surbiton. One of those 78 purchases, the 12" Columbia 'Saint Louis Blues' is probably the rarest shellac in his collection, but the album 'Sshhh!...Bing Crosby Volume 2' must rank as one of the most sought after discs which he owns because only 63 copies of this Australian album were pressed.

Fellow Crosby enthusiast Frank Murphy set Arnold on the taping trail in 1976 when he was asked to take over the tape section of Frank's Photoclub. As was mentioned in the February 1988 'Crosby Voice', Franks health has not been too good lately and he too is not wishing to expand Bing activities at the present time. However, back in the 'seventies, Arnold took on the taping service and he had mailed out over 1000 tapes by the end of the

decade. Names on the books of 'Tapes Exclusive', which evolved from the Photoclub offshoot, read like a Bing collectors Who's Who: Colin Pugh, Ralph Harding, Ken Barnes, Leslie Gaylor, George O'Reilly and so on.

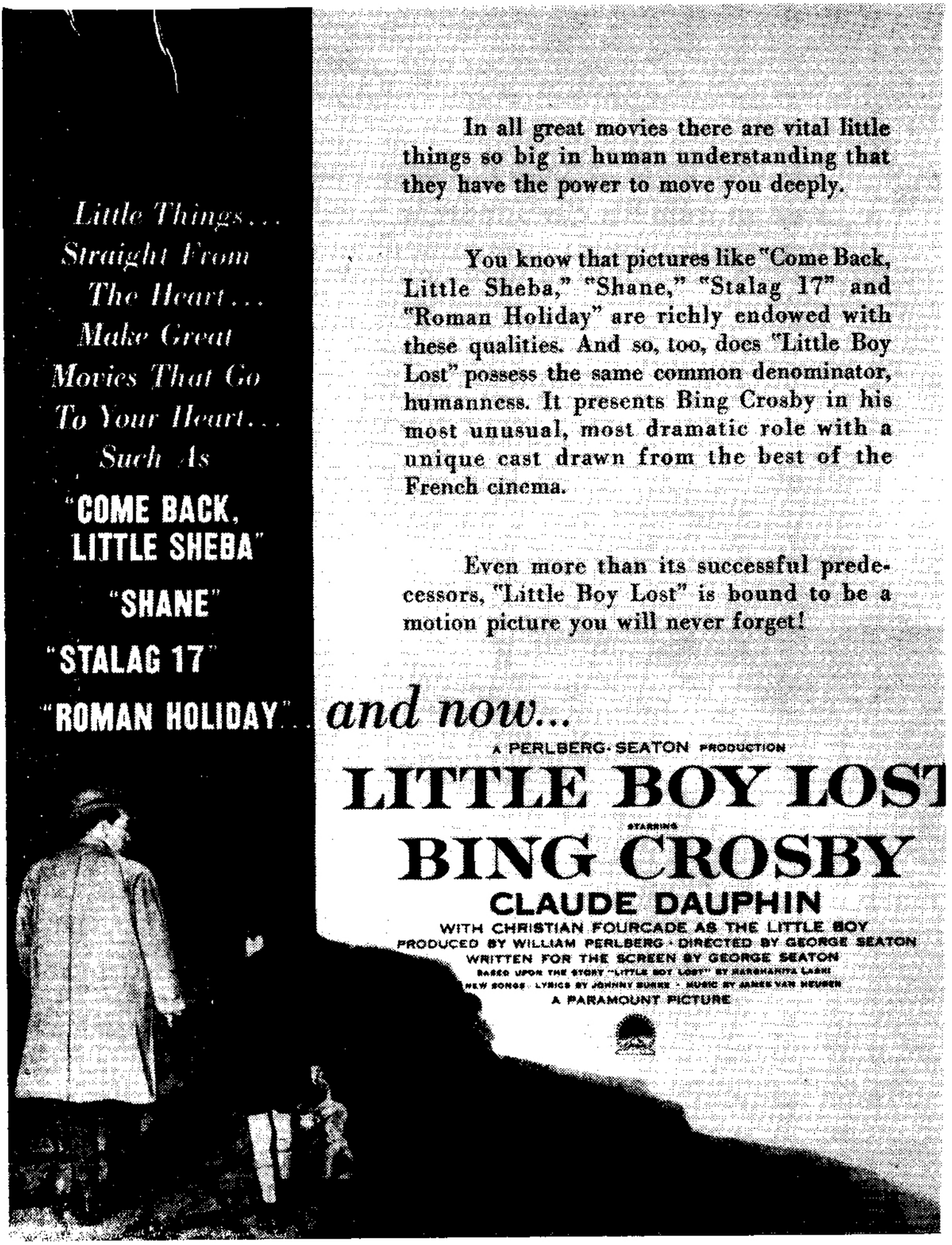
Anyone who has dealt with Arnold knows his musical tastes are wide. When a little packet arrives out of the blue with a Northern Ireland postmark, I know that it will be Bing or a 'quality' vocalist on a superbly compiled cassette. I have received tapes from Arnold apologising for slight sub-standard reproduction and I am still listening intently in trying to pinpoint the defect. Big band era and classic singers like Sinatra, Como, Haymes, Dinah Shore and Peggy Lee share the shelves with albums by Bing. Of course, Arnold has now been bitten by the CD bug. Admittedly taking up less space than the 2,500 LPs it will undoubtedly be a growing collection. Also in the Crosbyana collection is an unplayable Bing memento: a personal tie sent by Kathryn a few months after Bing's death.

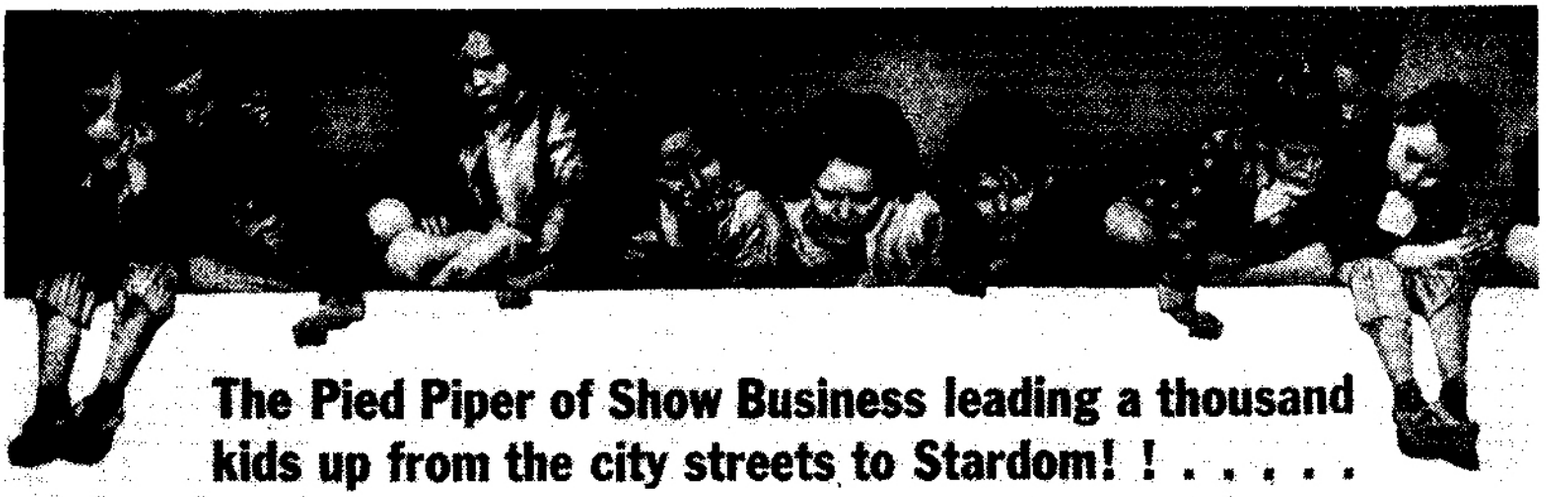
All of Arnold's letters show a keen sense of humour and he describes himself as 'Nancy's pride and joy'. Now retired but a youngster in outlook, our good wishes go out to Arnold and his wife nancy at a time when heart surgery is about to revitalise his lifestyle.

****

Three well-known names of the Crosby world get together. From left to right: Derek Parkes, Eddie Rice and Sheldon O'Connell.

20th Century-Fox presents
BING CROSBY · DEBBIE REYNOLDS · ROBERT WAGNER
THE ENTERTAINMENT THAT RINGS ALL THE BELLS IN YOUR HEART!
'SAY ONE FOR ME'


Little Things...
Straight From
The Heart...
Make Great
Movies That Go
To Your Heart...
Such As
"COME BACK,
LITTLE SHEBA"
"SHANE"
"STALAG 17"
"ROMAN HOLIDAY"...
In all great movies there are vital little things so big in human understanding that they have the power to move you deeply.
You know that pictures like "Come Back, Little Sheba," "Shane," "Stalag 17" and "Roman Holiday" are richly endowed with these qualities. And so, too, does "Little Boy Lost" possess the same common denominator, humanness. It presents Bing Crosby in his most unusual, most dramatic role with a unique cast drawn from the best of the French cinema.
Even more than its successful predecessors, "Little Boy Lost" is bound to be a motion picture you will never forget!
and now...
A PERLBERG-SEATON PRODUCTION
LITTLE BOY LOST
STARRING
BING CROSBY
CLAUDE DAUPHIN
WITH CHRISTIAN FOURCADE AS THE LITTLE BOY
PRODUCED BY WILLIAM PERLBERG · DIRECTED BY GEORGE SEATON
WRITTEN FOR THE SCREEN BY GEORGE SEATON
BASED UPON THE STORY "LITTLE BOY LOST" BY MARGHANITA LASKI
NEW SONGS · LYRICS BY JOHNNY BURKE · MUSIC BY JAMES VAN HEUSEN
A PARAMOUNT PICTURE



The Pied Piper of Show Business leading a thousand kids up from the city streets to Stardom! ! . . . . .

KIDS... skinny kids... plump kids... boys and girls from the sidewalks of old New York... singing their way, dancing their way, clowning their way to stardom under the magical direction of a tin pan alley song-writer, a small-time hoofer . . . That is the story of the grandest showman of them all, Gus Edwards . . . That is the story Paramount tells, throbbingly, gloriously, in this singing cavalcade of show business . . . "The Star Maker," based on Gus Edwards' amazing life history. You'll thrill to the lilting, heart stirring music of such old time favorites as Gus Edwards' own "School Days." You'll thrill to those new Paramount hits, like "Go Fly a Kite." You'll thrill to Paramount's new star discovery, little Linda Ware, as she sings to the accompaniment of a great Symphony Orchestra conducted by Walter Damrosch. You'll thrill to Bing Crosby, as "The Star Maker," the strongest, most human part Bing has ever played . . . but, most of all, you'll thrill to the kids themselves, dozens and dozens of 'em, chosen by Paramount from thousands of youngsters as the most talented kid stars in the U. S. A.

THRILL TO THESE OLD FAVORITES! THRILL TO THESE NEW HITS!

A Paramount Picture · Directed by Roy Del Ruth · Produced by CHARLES R. ROGERS · Screen Play by Frank Butler

SEPTEMBER 1939

Talk About Entertainment!...

IT MAY *NEVER* AGAIN BE POSSIBLE
TO COMBINE THE RARE ACADEMY AWARD INGREDIENTS
THAT WENT INTO THE MAKING OF THIS
MOTION PICTURE EVENT.

BING CROSBY, as a very American traveling salesman who (selling the first phonograph) hies himself to old Vienna, to the very court of the Emperor Franz Josef himself, where the gayest, most class-conscious aristocracy of yesterday's Europe is having THE Clambake of The Year . . .

JOAN FONTAINE as the Countess Stoltzenberg von Stoltzenberg. Her beauty is merely breath-taking. From the tip of her parasol to the tail of her French poodle, she is The Thorough Aristocrat. Only a Countess so very sure of her blood lines could have dared be as gossip-defying.

CHARLES BRACKETT *and*
BILLY WILDER Theirs is the producer-director gift of wit, satire, irony and the unusual ("The Lost Weekend" bears witness). Casting their foxy attentions upon "That Society" which was so sure it had solved all its problems it could just devote itself to wine, women and song, they create inspired havoc.

MELODY Songs come and go but the songs Bing Crosby, the traveling salesman, sings to the Viennese Countess combine the lilt of America with the schmaltz of Vienna; they will return to you, endearingly, through the years, even as the mountain echo faithfully returns to the yodel.

TECHNICOLOR—The Court of the Emperor Franz Josef; the natural, mountainous splendor of the Tyrol; spectacle and scenery filmed with a truly lavish magnificence.

ROMANCE—The Countess' French poodle, proud possessor of imposing lineage, falls violently, unreasoningly in love with the Traveling Salesman's gum-chewing mongrel. It would only be funny except for the confusing fact that the Countess plays fast and loose with the mongrel's master.

THEME As old as human nature, as new as the values we still seek—the ironical but timeless and never finished tale of how love demolishes class distinction, told in a flurry of lifted eye-brows and a rustle of tongues-in-cheeks.

PARAMOUNT gives you all this in . . .

"The Emperor Waltz"

starring BING CROSBY • JOAN FONTAINE
Color by Technicolor • with Roland Culver • Lucile Watson • Richard Haydn
Harold Vermilyea • Produced by Charles Brackett • Directed by Billy Wilder
Written by Charles Brackett and Billy Wilder

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT - THE VICTORIAN BING CROSBY SOCIETY

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1988 was a vintage year for things Crosby but not one of the great years for the Victorian Bing Crosby Society, as I'm sure that many of you will be aware, and we'll go into the reasons why in a minute.

However, on the Crosby record side, this has been by far one of the most exciting years in a long time. For a start, it was the year that the record companies really started to reissue Bing's records on Compact Disc. At last count, there were something like 20 Crosby CD's available around the world covering everything from commercial issues to songs from radio shows. And highly encouraging is the fact that the majority of issues were taken from original masters or very good 78's without fake stereo or too much unnecessary echo. In fact, we now have a fair sampling of Crosby releases from the 1920's through to the 1970's on compact disc. Unfortunately, you do have to order most of them from overseas as it would appear that the Australian record companies don't seem to think that there is a market for Bing on CD in this country yet.

1988 was also the year that really rare Crosby material started emerging from the woodwork with radio material dating as far back as early 1930 appearing on disc. And that's only part of the story. A number of rare tracks never heard before have come to light and these will be appearing on LP sometime in 1989. These are songs that you've NEVER heard Bing sing before and I can guarantee that the sound quality will be as good as humanly possible.

As I mentioned at the start however, this hasn't been the best of years for the Victorian Bing Crosby Society - not so far as magazines go at least - but then I guess that I don't have to remind you of that, or the reasons why we've only been able to produce two issues in the whole year. Thank you to all those people who wrote in saying that they'd be happy with just three issues per annum. It will make my life easier and also save the club a few dollars. Like everyone else, we have felt the squeeze. It now costs well over a thousand dollars to produce and mail out one edition of the Crosby Voice, especially now that mail charges have risen again.

These film nights also cost more although now that we have raised the door charges, they should be self-supporting. By and large, they're very well supported by the membership which is very good because they really are the heart of the Victorian Bing Crosby Society.

In an effort to raise funds, we attempted to hold our first international raffle for the club, but the results were very disappointing. Fortunately, we were able to cover all costs involved, but we didn't end up very far ahead.

However, despite everything, and eleven years after Bing's death, the club does continue to function and grow. We still add new members, particularly overseas, and thanks must go to our representatives, Keith Parkinson in the UK and Mark Scrimger in the USA, both of whom put a lot of personal time and effort into helping us with our operations.'

A special word of thanks must also go to Vern Taylor of the USA, surely one of the best friends that the Crosby world has. Vern's professionally written and well structured articles are the highlight of 'The Crosby Voice'.

Thanks also go to our hard working committee, Josie, Sylvia, Ada and Ted, Ken, Bill and Jim (when he's not up North enjoying the Queensland sunshine) and also Bob Neate, who lent a very welcome hand with the last magazine.

We also had a few people not too well during the year including Ron Were who we're happy to see back in good health. Unfortunately, Ken Orren has had a few recurrent problems in recent weeks with the illness that dogged him last year and we all hope that he'll be back firing on all four cylinders shortly.

While thanking people, I can't forget our hard working projectionist Joe Glasson who pretends to enjoy these old movies when Joe is secretly a Rolling Stones fan.

Eleven years on after Bing's passing, it's good to see that so many people can still gather together to enjoy his work. In fact, if I could close with a line from Vern Taylor which appears in the latest issue of the magazine - perhaps Bing did something even more beautiful than sing for us. He made friends out of strangers.

Bob Machliss, September 1988.

****

Old music brought to life with noise cure

From PEARCE WRIGHT
in London

OLD recordings of music on deteriorating gramophone records can be recreated as faithfully as the original performance using a technique that removes the noise caused by scratches and other damage.

The system has been used to remake as diverse a range of artists as Ravel, Andres Segovia, the Andrews Sisters and the Grateful Dead.

It has also been used in forensic science tests, rendering a taped conversation between a murderer and the victim audible above background noise.

The invention – called NoNoise – is the latest advance in the use of so-called artificially intelligent computers for the analysis of electronic signals for military communications and industrial purposes. The discovery, by Sonic Solutions, in San Francisco, California, simply takes the noise out of old recordings.

Using artificial intelligence, it can even reconstruct short pieces of missing music.

Two processes are used. One removes brief noise like clicks and another removes steady noise.

The NoNoise system is used primarily to remaster old recordings for release on compact discs since that medium should be noise-free regardless of the original condition of the recording.

NoNoise begins by making a digital tape recording of the original master, whether it is on tape, film or an old 78rpm record. Tapes are then loaded on to a large-capacity computer.

For declicking, the system reconstructs the problem portion of the recording by analysing the content before and after the click, and interpolating the portion in-between.

Removing steady noise, like hiss, is a longer process. The system first samples the noise at 2000 points in the frequency spectrum, creating a sonic fingerprint used to differentiate between noise and signal.

Tests are then run to determine the maximum level of noise reduction possible without altering content.

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TREASURER'S REPORT

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Statement of Receipts and Payments Year Ended 30.9.88

BALANCE 30.9.87		796.81	
Receipts			
Fees		1496.65	
Video cass + cass library		437.00	
Sale of records		399.00	
Raffles + Entry fees on film nights		1658.50	
Miscellaneous			
Fund raising	65.00		
Bank interest	35.96		
Ent fees	12.00		
		112.96	
Total Receipts			4104.11
			4900.92
PAYMENTS			
Books, cassettes, records		974.05	
Raffles		92.90	
Printing/postage newsletter		1684.73	
Video & film hire		200.00	
Miscellaneous			
Refreshments	104.68		
Theatre hire	1162.00		
Bank charges	9.39		
Record refunds	32.00		
		1308.07	
Total Payments			4529.75
BALANCE 30.9.88			641.17
RECONCILIATION			
Balance 30.9.87			796.81
Receipts			4104.11
			4900.92
Payments			4259.75
Balance 30.9.88			641.17
Balance per bank statement			691.17
Less unpresented cheque 150708			50.00
Balance as per cash book			641.17

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COLLECTORS' CORNER

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Four record labels of interest, featuring one of Bing's first 78s under his own name and one of the last. 'I Surrender Dear' was (supposedly) the disc that helped Bing break into radio in 1931, while 'Paris Holiday' with Bob Hope was issued in the late 1950's, to help publicize Hope's new film of the same name. Naturally, like all records of that time, it was also issued on 45rpm.

Reissues are nothing new as these two versions of 'I Found A Million Dollar Baby' will testify. Top right is the original US issue from 1931 whilst bottom left shows a reissue included as part of an album, probably from the 1940s. Interesting to note that the order of the composers has been rearranged on the two labels.

World War II GIs didn't dream of Christmas without Crosby

DEL STELCK

GUEST COLUMNIST

Del Stelck is professor of history emeritus at California State University, Northridge. He is a veteran of four World War II campaigns as a rifleman with the First Marines.

The Bing Crosby historical society wants our help. Its members want Uncle Sam to issue a Crosby postage stamp. Sounds like a good idea. For more than half a century, Bing's recordings have given enjoyment and special memories. His vocals of the old Christmas favorites have long been a part of the holiday tradition. Maybe we can have a Crosby commemorative stamp for use on our greeting cards next year. The only stamps I could buy in "coil" this year honored the honey bee.

Music triggers memories. Never more so, it seems, than at Christmas time. Crosby records were already a part of yuletide before World War II. In 1943 his music impacted with heightened poignancy hundreds of thousands of American servicemen spending their first Christmas overseas. Along with "El Bingo" they only dreamed of a White Christmas. Forty-five years ago this Christmas Eve in jungle rain and mud, men of the First Marines listened to Bing from a scratchy "loudspeaker" hung from a coconut tree.

Later in WWII, the First Marine Regiment would have its own "Bing." We knew him as Bing Vitere from the Bronx! In sound and style so like Crosby, his nickname was inevitable. Noted war correspondent Ernie Pyle wrote home of this similarity. When Cpl. Jack Paar and five talented GIs came to entertain Marines on Pavuvu, they borrowed Vitere for a few weeks to help entertain troops on nearby islands. "Incredible," exclaimed Paar, "He's so much like Crosby it will always be tough for him to make it as an entertainer." Vitere survived the war, but never attempted a musical career. No commemorative stamp for the "Bing," although the guys who made it home always agreed Vitere and his battered guitar deserved recognition of some kind.

Decimated at Guadalcanal, the First Marine Division recuperated at Melbourne, sailed north in Kaiser Liberty ships via Townsville to Goodenough Island for maneuvers and then in late December, on to the coast of New Guinea above Lae. They didn't know it then, but First Marines would celebrate Christmas Day below deck on assault ships en route to Cape Gloucester, New Britain, and land there the following day. At the opposite end of the island was the Japanese bastion, Rabaul, giving rise to feeble humor. "Will your name be on the roster when you leave Cape Gloucester?"

Christmas Eve, 1943, still indelible in memory, was at Finschhafen in a deserted, overgrown plantation. As darkness settled the downpour stopped. Someone from "Communications" spun an old 78 — possibly a "V" record. Across the jungle silence Bing caroled of shepherds, flocks, and star of light. He sang of home with snow and mistletoe and ended with "Silent Night." The Crosby Voice, for a few precious moments, had caused time to stand still.

During the decades that have sped by since that long ago Christmas Eve, Bing's popularity still persists among Americans from all walks of life. His music enlivens each holiday season. I'm persuaded the self-styled "Old Groaner" deserves a commemorative stamp. I think I'll take a few minutes and write to the Postmaster General.

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BING AT DEL MAR

****

by Vernon Wesley Taylor

Hollywood was seldom busier turning out movie musicals than it was in the middle of the 1930s. Most of the great singers and dancers in motion-pictures were already famous, with enormous hordes of their followers crowding the theatres across the land. Fred Astaire & Ginger Rogers, Jeanette MacDonald & Nelson Eddy, Dick Powell & Ruby Keeler may have all been leading couples, but Mae West, Eddie Cantor, Betty Grable, Al Jolson and Shirley Temple were doing just as well with their single turns. They and dozens just like them were making 'movie history' and they have been part of our lives ever since.

Not quite as big as the biggest of them, yet, Bing Crosby was most definitely on his way. When he got there it would be said of him that he did it without heavy going, the turmoil so many others endured or inflicted. Books have since been written about him which attempted to explain how he did it so easily and so well but his obvious need to catch and keep inner peace has so far been overlooked. Like a juggler that must keep several balls in the air at the same time, Bing required that his balance be firm and steady. His varying activities, the crossgrain of his attentions were actually what made him so good at what he did, what enabled him to achieve so much more than a singing career. As his accomplishments in so many directions worked themselves out, his centre remained immovable and firmly in control. He communicated that peace to those around him.

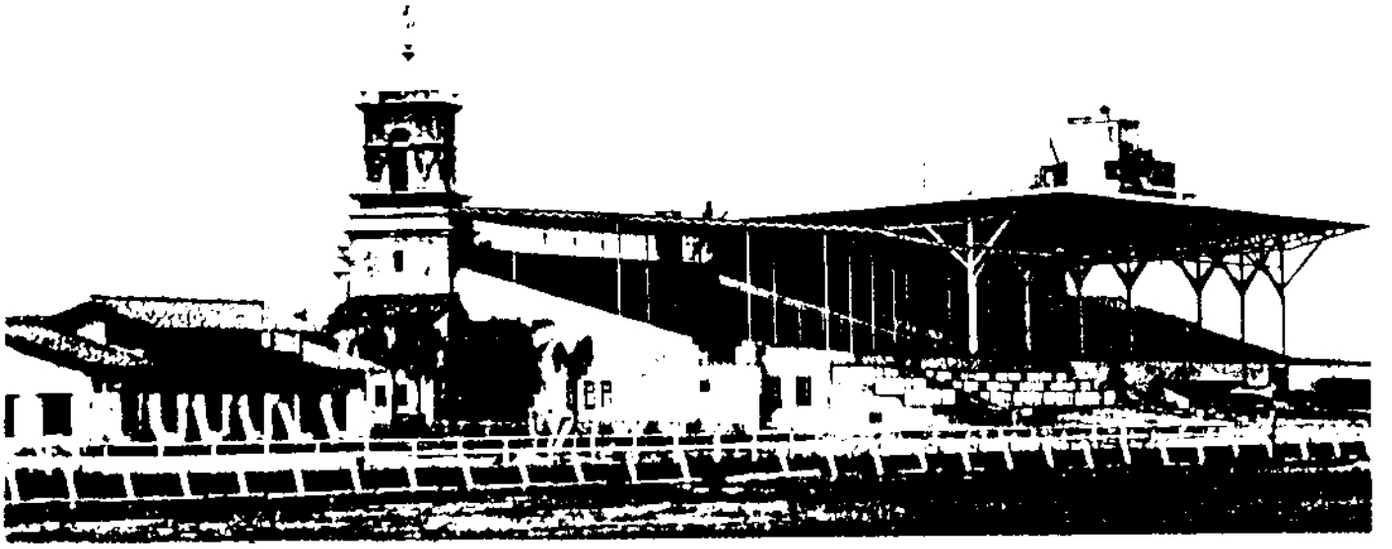
One of those accomplishments, Del Mar, a racetrack at the southernmost end of the State of California has become a permanent fixture of the Sport Of Kings.

He had been looking around that attractive countryside, off and on, for weeks, searching for a spot to breed and raise horses. Horse racing with its attendant pleasures had provided him with a needed change of pace. The area around San Diego provided access to many courses but especially to the fine track near the bordertown of Tijuana in Mexico. He had run several of his thoroughbreds at Aqua Caliente and living close by would make things simpler. He finally purchased part of an original Spanish land grant, the Don Juan Osuna Ranch in Rancho Santa Fe, had a ranch-house and stables and a fenced track built and settled in.

It was a beautiful location between the piney foothills rolling down from the Coyote Mountains and Pacific, where salt breezes and rolling surf could work wonders for both men and beasts - especially horses. The racing was 'mucho' that season south of the border and Bing remained his normal self, busy and contented, until a fellow enthusiast, Bill Quigley from nearby La Jolla wondered whether Mr. Crosby might not appreciate a place closer to home for running the ponies. If he did, he was in luck, because the local grange folks, even as they spoke, were starting a little fairgrounds right next door, practically, and they were talking about building a mile-course and a grandstand.

NBC

NBC



Bing needed no more and immediately approached the 'garage people', the 22nd District Agricultural Association with a proposition. They agreed his money was as good as anyone else's and he got on the phone to friends up in Hollywood. Among those at a hurry-up meeting at the Warner Brothers Studios in Burbank a short time later were some of the most familiar names in the business. They listened to Bill Quigley and Bing outlined a proposal which might make them all rich - or at least a little richer. In no time at all they formed a corporation. They named it the Del Mar Turf Club and set the shares at $100 each. Crosby bought the most and was immediately elected the president. Pat O'Brien, the actor who could talk faster than any other star in movies, ponied up the next largest block and was just as instantly elected vice-president.

Others jumped in with more modest investment, Gary Cooper, Joe E. Brown and Oliver 'Babe' Hardy, a Lakeside golfing buddy of Bing's. Everett Crosby, Bing's careful brother was made secretary-treasurer and Quigley became the Del Mar Turf Club's General Manager. The 22nd Association gave them a ten year lease and they were off and running.

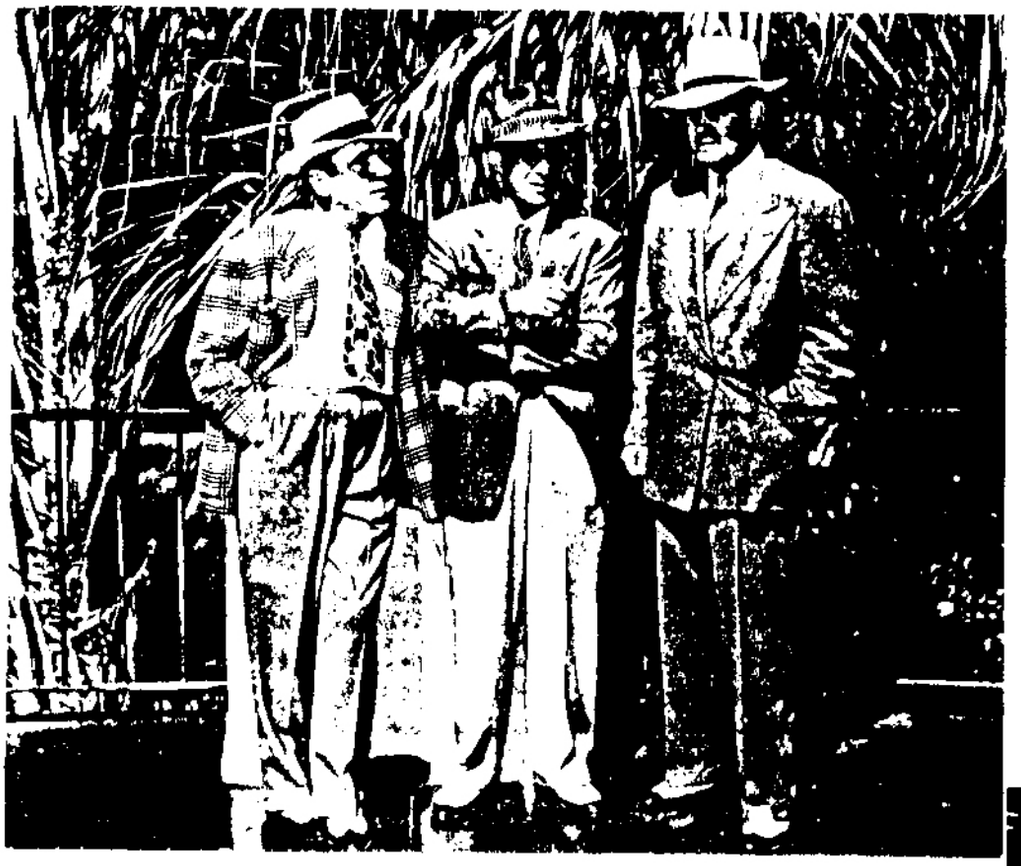
A pair of architects from San Diego was hired who quickly worked up a design that almost became endemic in Southern California, an admixture of Spanish Colonial, Louis XV French and Venetian. A contractor began construction and surprisingly soon a racetrack, its outbuildings and offices, parking lot and track appeared. One Los Angeles matron adoringly described the steward's stand beside the rail on the infield as 'perfectly darling' and it still is.

Pat O'Brien went down often that spring to do whatever he could. There is a photograph of him, his pith helmet worn at a rakish slant, operating a tractor and pulling a harrow around the track. Bing is shown in another, up on the metal struts of the grandstand with one of the architects. Both of them were all over the joint, all of the time.

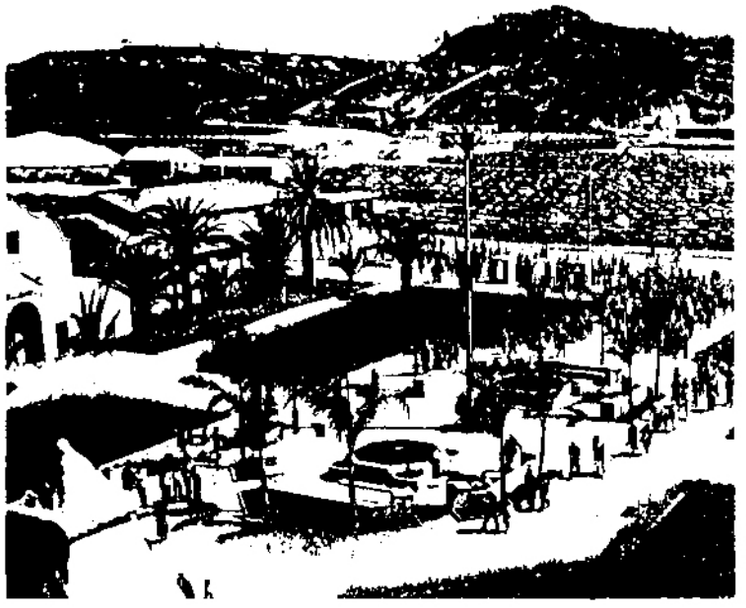
Del Mar was begun during the first Roosevelt Administration, a time unique in American history. Federally funded projects were used to create jobs for the millions of unemployed caught in the Great Depression bind. Political observers are still debating the pros and cons of that mighty endeavour. The Government's Works Progress Administration (WPA) became a partner in the Del Mar fairgrounds consortium, but at about this time, the US Congress, becoming increasingly alarmed at all the money-gobbling enterprises all over the country, began cutting back on allocations it decided were too frivolous. Del Mar and the WPA parted company.

Crosby may have received much of his lyrical, poetic feeling from his Irish mother but surely his father's Danish forbears had something to do with hs stubborn urge to finish whatever he started.

At that moment he needed all the help he could get and so his determination came in handy. To save what had become an important dream to a lot of people, he went back to his glamourous counterparts in Hollywood for more money. Then he convinced Pat O'Brien that the two of them could borrow against their own life insurance policies.. Ultimately, between them, they put up the $600 thousand but their faith paid off.



POOL
SHOW
POOL



By July 3rd of that summer of 1937, with the roof over the grandstand just finished and the paint not quite dry on the beautiful Spanish camponile at the end of it, the track opened. It was noon on a glorious summer day.

Less than 48 hours before, Bing had closed his famous Kraft Music Hall radio program for the season and had finished his work on his latest flick, "Double Or Nothing". In the very next week he would be back in Los Angeles putting the four chief songs from that picture onto the equally famous blue label Decca records. By the time he was ready to start his next picture in the Autumn he would have produced another 14 vocals for Decca, re-opened his KMH show and made about a dozen radio appearances as star or guest-star. Strangely, there were still thousands of his fans and co-workers who truly believe he was even more lazy and 'carefree' than his publicity claimed he was!

Now he was at the turnstiles and the cameras were grinding. A happy Long Beach resident, Mrs. W.R. Richardson, wearing a chic-tuned-up straw bonnet with a ruffled blouse under a white two-piece tailored suit was greeted by 'the old Groaner', wearing a blue seaman's cap and a crumpled sportshirt and gripping his pipe in a big grin. He took her ticket and she walked towards the photographers. Behind this first customer, long lines waited patiently to meet Bing too, the other gates remaining closed so that they would not miss meeting him.

Traditions reverently observed began that afternoon, among them the Santa Fe's spur from Los Angeles, bringing in scores of passengers. On opening day, of all days, it came in late. When it was finally spotted, a mighty cheer rose from all throats. Since then, until autos and busses rendered it obsolete, the Race Track Special duly received its accolade as soon as it was spied between the hills chugging toward the track.

The Official Festivities officially began over the infield when Mr Crosby, properly attired at last - wearing a brilliant blue sportscoat and blinding white slacks, topped with as straw skimmer - turned his gaze towards the expectant crowd in and around the grandstand. He leaned slightly towards a mike and said, "We hope you all enjoy the meeting and have a measure of success at the payoff windows." He needed to say no more.

At a very precise 2:24 p.m., allowing the train-riders time to place their bets, the first Del Mar race started ("Ladies and gentlemen, they're off and away!"). By one of those inexplicable and embarrassing little quirks in life, Bing Crosby's horse, High Strike, wearing the blue and gold colours with jockey Jackie Burrill up, won all the way to the wire. The joyous crowd loved it, cheering all the louder when the results came over the speakers.

Another of the fondly kept traditions is that of the formal ceremonies which begin and end each racing day. Along with the usual attention-getting bugle-calls and the raising of the flag, Bing is heard singing 'Where The Turf Meets The Surf'. Nowadays, other California courses use his vocal when posting the Del Mar race results for their own patrons. And even here Bing had a hand in the doing. With the help of a couple of other friends, he wrote the lyrics. Johnny Burke and Jimmy Monaco, contract songwriters, dressed it up for publication.

To many Crosby Watchers, it is very evident that Bing had a rather natural flair for the uses of publicity; he seemed to be that rare type, a first-rate salesman. If so it was probably these instincts that told him, when Quigley first broached the subject, that Del Mar might fly. It is true that throughout his long entertainer's career, he managed always to encourage others to join him in speculative ventures (although, sometimes it was quite the other way around). In the course of these events, he used his acumen and public image to help create a business where none had been before. No one knows exactly how many started their own careers or how many hundreds of jobs were created by him. The book, 'The Business Bing', has yet to be written; in fairness to him, it certainly should be. The story of the track at Del Mar illustrates the truth that he was something more than a movie star.

He overlooked no opportunity to get that racetrack underway. He carried the challenge even into his professional world by incorporating references to his horses and to Del Mar into his own and other radio broadcasts. These usually appeared in the form of throwaway jokes ("Has our boy, Bing been busy this summer? No, he's been down at Del Mar getting free grass for his horses.") Years later, he was still tossing out little reminders that Del Mar was there, even in his pictures. By the time it opened it was known of or at least, heard by millions who only came to hear him sing. On that last show for Kraft for the 1936-37 season, for example, the resident comedian, Bob Burns, devotes the whole of one of his very popular routines to it. Almost suddenly, all across the United States and Canada, everyone know about the racetrack where the turf meets the surf.

From the first, regular broadcasts were aired there each Saturday morning. For years they were a popular fixture up and down the coast. Crosby, himself, found the time to appear on many of them and quite often used performers from his own show, coaxing them from Hollywood to give him a helping hand. Most of these radio shows are lost today, unfortunately; they were as good as any of the bigtime broadcasts. One, salvaged from forgotten reference discs, is of a press-preview party for a Crosby picture, 'Rhythm On The River', which included the leading lady, the director and many others, including the orchestra and announcer from the Kraft Music Hall. Since they were also in the picture, it was not too difficult for the old salesman to persuade them to hop the Racetrack Special. It is recalled that Charlie LaVere, the piano player (and excellent jazzman) refused to discuss all details but his smug smile is still unforgotten and his trips on that choo-choo are envied bits of yesterday.

Another Del Mar radio show is a simple encourager to listeners that the track hopes to see them soon. It is a quiz and Bing is the quizmaster, asking horseplay questions. The lucky winner is a very pleased young lady, with a delivery by Mr. Crosby of a then very popular song, 'It Makes No Difference Now', with added personal lyrics. The flavour of Del Mar was never more picturesquely epitomized.

'Bing's Racetrack' became a fun experience right from the start. Unlike the more ordinary hustle-bustle of such a place, it developed into a kind of extension of the Crosby personality. There is a calm, relaxed mood, a pleasant little pleasure-world where even the betting is a slow, studied

effort. One of the early media officials said "(Here) nobody's in a hurry but the horses". A book out last year, 'Del Mar Its Life And Good Times', (to which I owe so much for some of the facts and figures) has the author, William Murray confessing, after a few visits, "I thought I had discovered paradise". He has since spent the last fifteen summers there.

While only a fool would dare to suggest that a racetrack could ever become successful without good horses and horse-people, Bing added a most essential ingredient to their mix: Famous Personalities. In those days even more than now, the Magic Faces and Voices held the public's fancy. They imparted a lustre that is shining still. In those critical first years, a large proportion of them obeyed the impulse Bing suggested and put Del Mar on the 'things to do' list. Such pretty people as Gloria Swanson, William Powell, Jimmy Durante, Paulette Goddard, Edward G. Robinson and Mickey Rooney, who later would fly down in his own plane, could be seen with the likes of W.C. Fields, Hoagy Carmichael, Jack Dempsey, J. Edgar Hoover, Ali Kahn and Louella Parsons. Somehow they blended in well with the clusters of the more anonymous sort, who did not in the least mind their glittering presence. They were photographed with the jockeys, the newspaper men, the trainers and clockers and horses, especially the beautiful horses. Most of them played the ponies, some even won on them. Red Skelton once lost his shirt. To prove it, he allowed himself to be photographed with only his trousers and shoes. On more than one occasion, Bing's parents, wife and children were visitors.

As with any enterprise, the track (to make unavoidable use of a terrible pun) had its ups and downs, but it was truly on its way by the time the Agricultural Association gave them their second lease. Things were changing around most pleasantly. World War II was over at last and the country had never been so prosperous. Bing was busier than ever, with more significant films and more Deccas. He had won an Academy Award Oscar and was deep into new concerns. One of them, struggling with the broadcast industry to permit him to record his show instead of continuing with the onerous 'live' presentation, was to change the way radio and television were to be presented.

By 1946, Crosby and O'Brien decided to sell their Del Mar holdings and move on. It was not until then - nine years later - that they received their investment back, but without interest. They had not made even one penny on their shares, but both were satisfied at their success.

The years sped by and Bing found little or no opportunity to visit until his final year, when he went down and spent part of a day. He was greeted heartily by everybody. He roamed around the grounds noting the many changes more then thirty years had wrought. It must have been satisfying for him to discover there was much there that had not changed. The atmosphere - ambience it is called now - had not altered one iota. It was busier and maybe more efficient but it was the same old place.

He discovered several old friends and made a number of new ones. If they stared at him a trifle too much, he didn't mind; he was used to that. If they talked, he listened attentively. It must have been a touching moment with old faces remembered, old jokes re-told, old pals missed.

Before he went away, he recorded once more the familiar theme-song, 'Where The Turf Meets The Surf'. His voice, of course, was older and gentler, with just a hint of sadness in it but there was much of the old enthusiasm too, Today, whenever you visit Del Mar, you will hear him, each day during the season, crank things up with his 1937 version and then wind them down with the 1977.

For Del Mar, as for so many whose lives he touched, Bing Crosby was their winner in more ways than one.

* * *

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: Our thanks go to the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club for their kind permission to use the pictures which add so much atmosphere to this article.

If you would like to purchase a copy of the book, 'Del Mar - Its Life And Good Times', you can by writing to the:

Del Mar Thoroughbred Club,
PO Box 700,
Del Mar,
California 92014
USA.

Cost is $US5.00 for the book and I guess that you should add on a few more dollars to cover postage, especially to Australia.

****

YOU'VE READ THE ARTICLE - NOW HEAR THE TAPE!

****

Vern Taylor has very thoughtfully prepared a new cassette for both the Del Mar Thoroughbred Club and the club library featuring some of the rare and historic radio material mentioned in his article:

"Where the Turf Meets the Surf" (1937), extracts from KMH broadcasts two days before the club opened, a press party for the preview of 'Rhythm On the River (1940), a radio quiz from Del Mar with Bing as quizmaster (1941) and "Where the Turf Meets the Surf" (1977).

To avoid having too many different cassette classifications in the library, we have included this new tape in the 'JJ' series. Please ask for JJ18.

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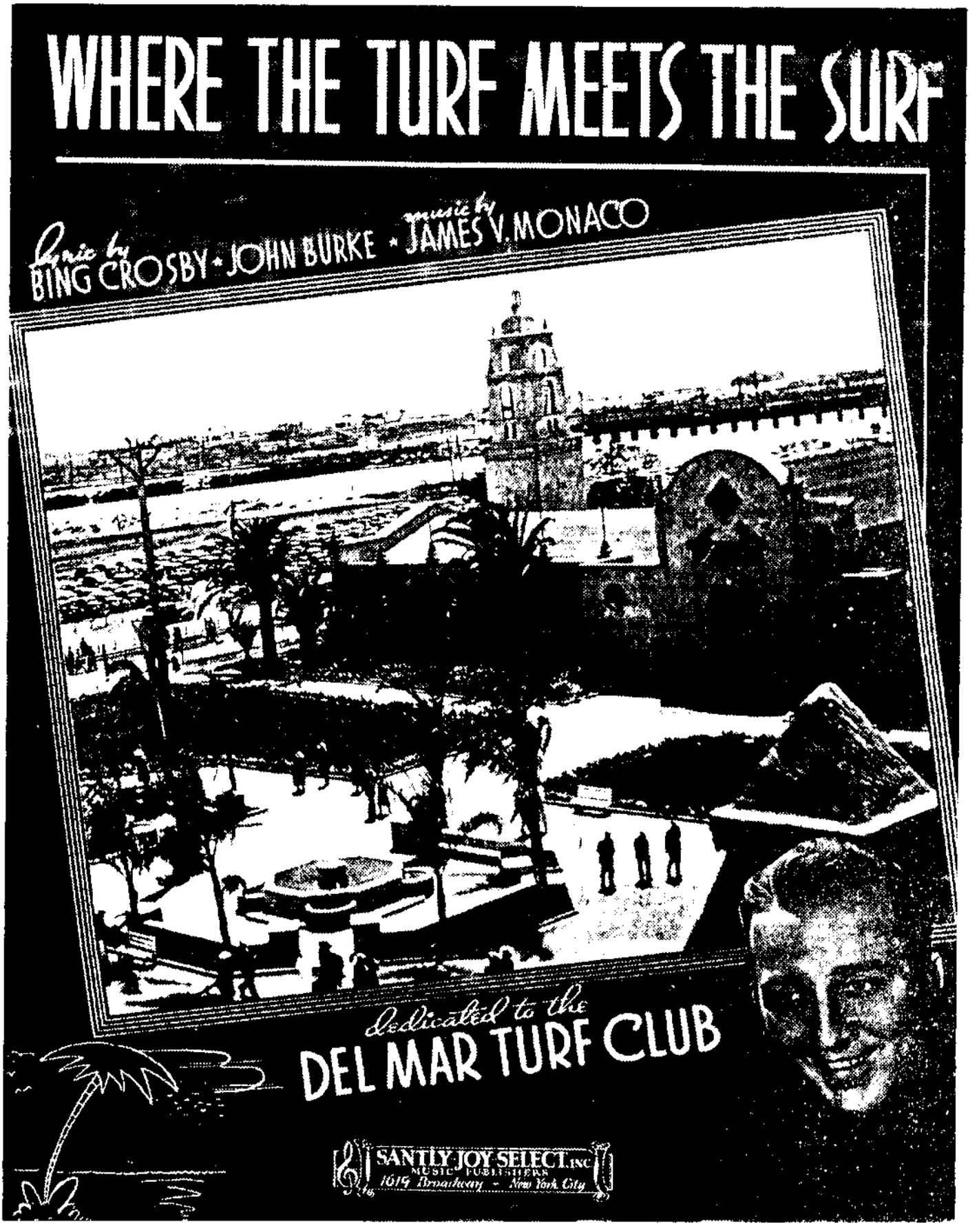
WHERE THE TURF MEETS THE SURF
lyric by BING CROSBY • JOHN BURKE • music by JAMES V. MONACO
dedicated to the
DEL MAR TURF CLUB
SANTLY-JOY-SELECT, INC.
MUSIC PUBLISHERS
1619 Broadway - New York City

Where The Turf Meets The Surf

(Diagrams for Guitar Acc.)

Lyric by
BING CROSBY and
JOHNNY BURKE

Music by
JAMES V. MONACO

Moderato

Piano

f

Voice

F7 B♭ F7 B♭

Some peo - ple dream of Moon - light on the Gan - ges, Some

mf

F B♭ B♭dim.

dream of where the Riv er Shan - non flows; While

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Publications Francis Day 30 Rue de L'Echiquier, Paris (Xe) France
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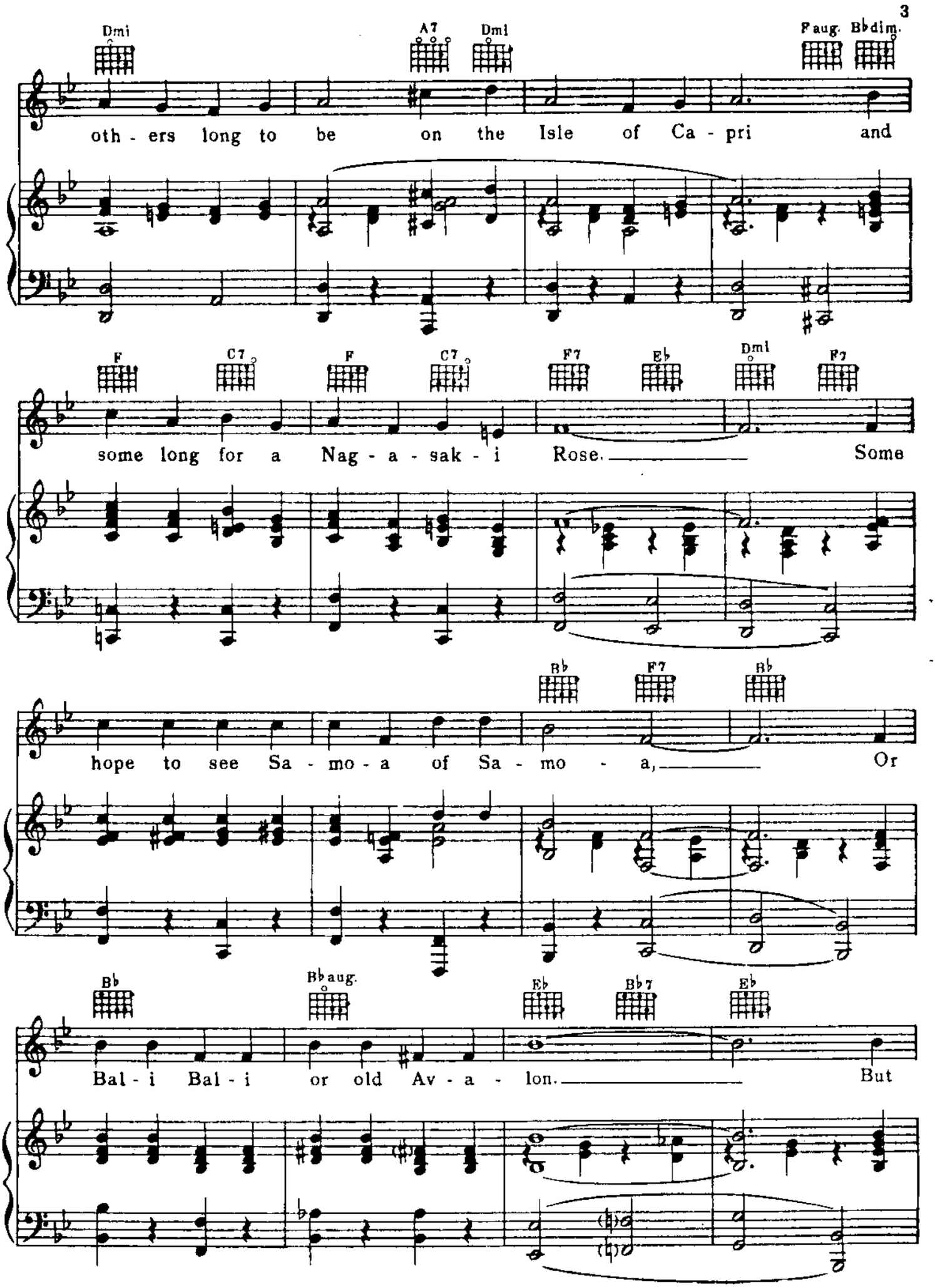
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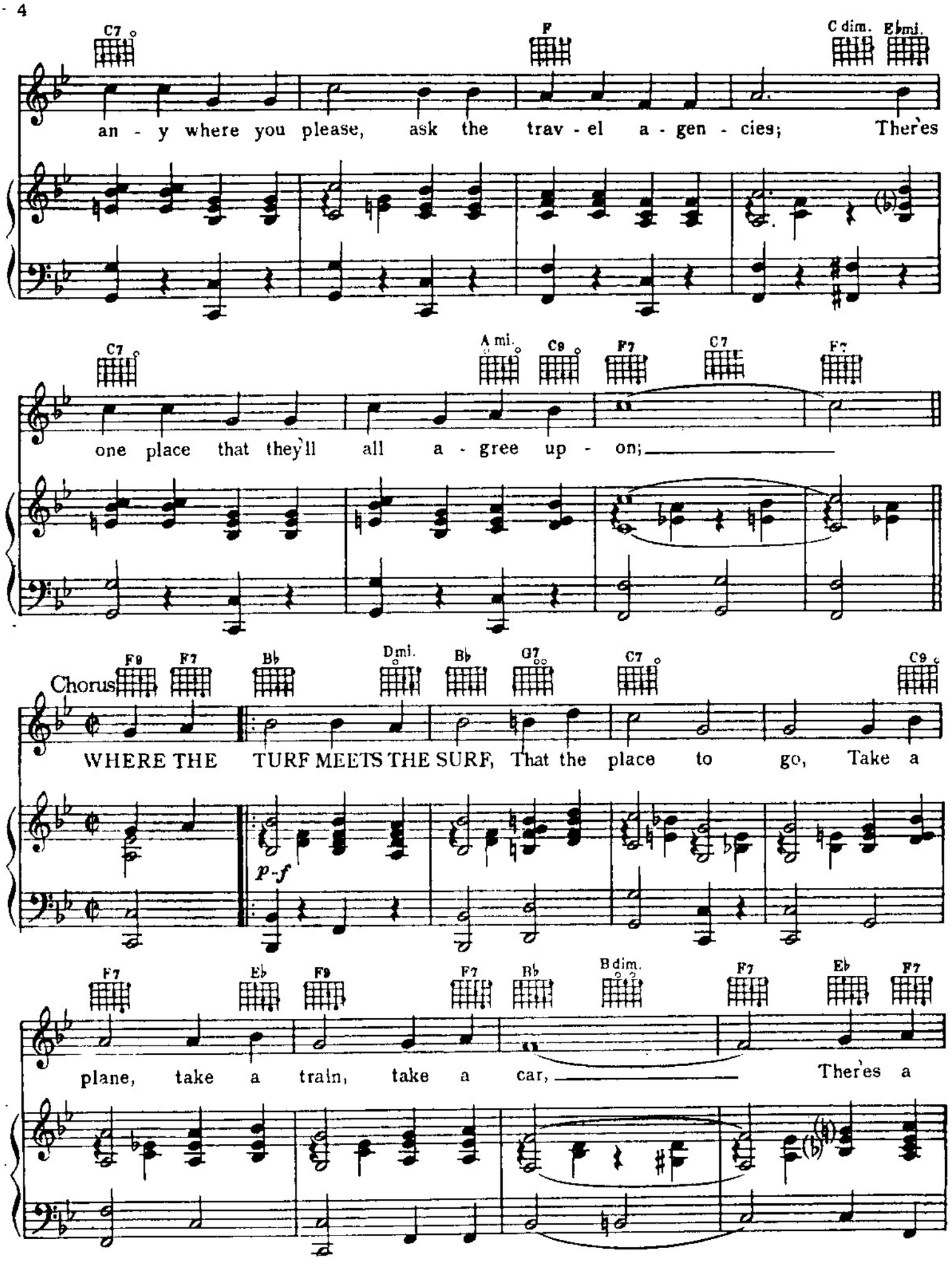
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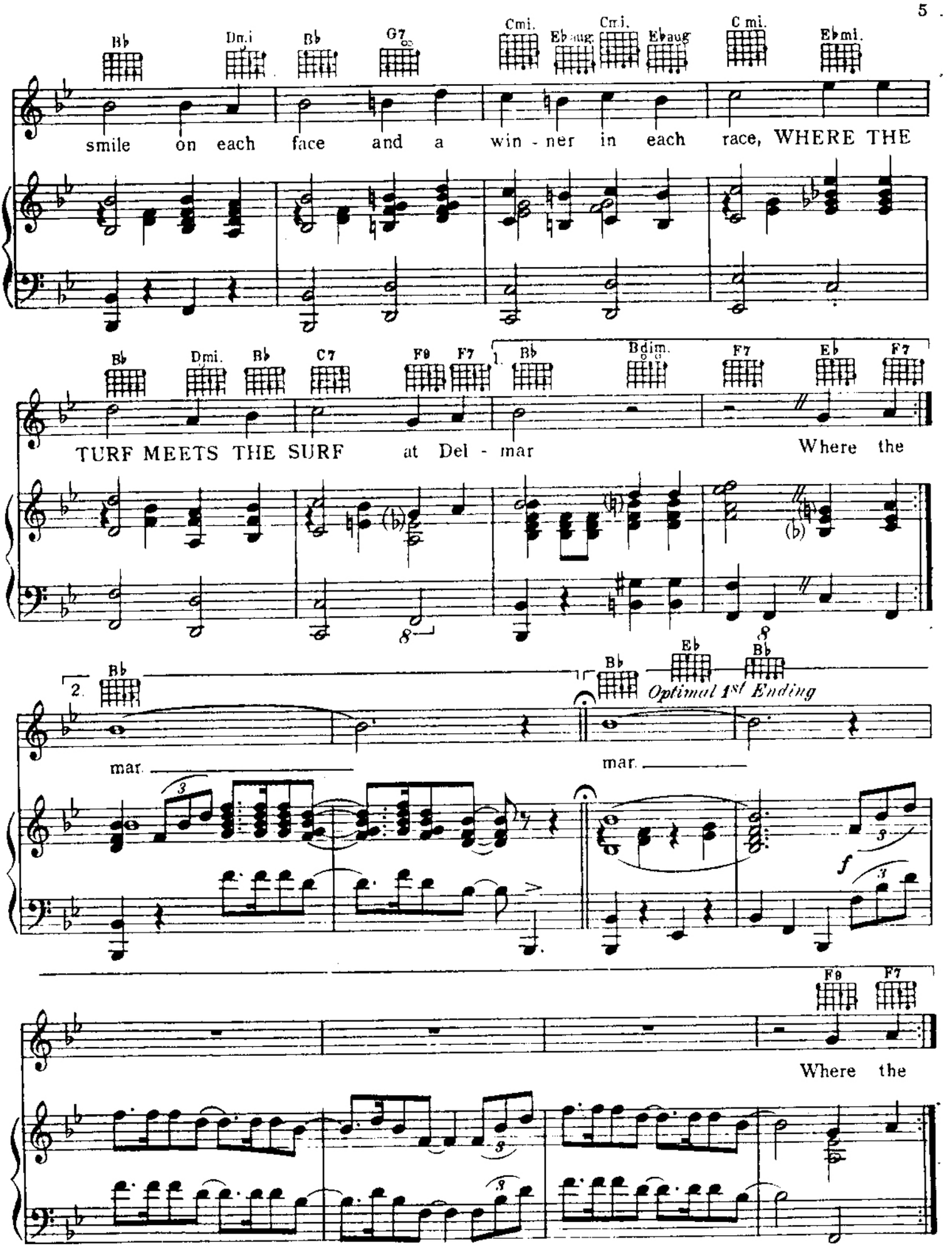
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Where the

WATCH BING SING, BENNY SWING AND LAWRENCE WELK.

"Remembering Bing"	Tuesday, January 24th	9:30 p.m.
"Benny Goodman: Let's Dance— A Musical Tribute"	Thursday, January 26th	7:30 p.m.
"Lawrence Welk: Television's Music Man"	Friday, January 27th	7:30 p.m.

NJN takes you down memory lane on three separate evenings for a nostalgic look at three of America's most beloved performers. Start with the life and career of Bing Crosby. Next, join the 'King of Swing' Benny Goodman for a special performance recorded at the New York Marriott Marquis. And finally, learn all about Lawrence Welk: the man behind the "champagne music."

Check your cable listings.

NJN

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THE BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY REPORT

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From Ken Twiss

* For the past few months, our mail has indicated there is a re-awakening of interest in Bing Crosby, more than at any time since his passing. This we should take advantage of. I propose a plan that has no formal organization but which would have a telling impact on the memory of Bing.

Each Bing club around the world could stimulate interest by generating publicity about Bing, by holding any kind of function that would be appropriate such as a get-together of friends, perhaps for dinner or a home showing of a Crosby movie; anything where few or many people could gather.

BCHS has accomplished a great deal in the past ten years and now our State Centennial gives us the opportunity to get a lot of exposure with the Trailer project. A minimum of 40,000 people are expected to visit this exhibit. This in turn will give the BCHS credibility to get grants for our projected permanent memorial to Bing. This would give each member a part in remembering Bing personally.

* Recently a Tacoma citizen had a great idea: Why not name the new Tacoma spur Bing Crosby Way?

The spur takes drivers directly into downtown Tacoma, with a series of on and off ramps and interchanges, so that travellers on the intestate no longer just sail past Tacoma as though it didn't exist. How fitting to name it after one of the city's most famous alumni.

What a challenge this represents for some energetic person. Many problems have to be faced, overcome and solved, with a lot of lobbying and arm-twisting.

For example, the federal government prohibits federal highways and roads from being named after persons. But this particular freeway section was state sponsored, so that Olympia needs to be attacked with persistence. Petition drives must take place, with armies of volunteers getting signatures, then lots of follow through at state level.

What a way to honour Bing Crosby, but in doing the job reflect credit and recognition on the person conducting the drive.

It's a challenge! Any takers?

* Bing Crosby stamp - Tommy (Bing) White, Hon National Spokesman of the BCHS writes. "Mr Paul Nehrich, a union delegate for CSEA/AFSCME Local 830, New York, introduced Resolution 179 at the Union's 26th international convention in Los Angeles last June...a petition for the Crosby stamp to be on an international basis. Any members who have not yet written to the Post Office letting them know your support, do so now, to Anthony M. Frank, Postmaster General in Washington DC 20260-6300.

THE BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, PO BOX 216, TACOMA, WASH. 98401, USA.

BING CROSBY
AND THE VOICES OF CHRISTMAS
A Holiday Listening Series in a Special Listening Room
December 6 – December 31, 1988

The Museum of Broadcasting
[illegible] East 53rd Street
[illegible], NY 10022

For over thirty years, Bing Crosby was a major radio star. His Christmas specials date back to his tenure as host of NBC's *Kraft Music Hall*. The Museum of Broadcasting will celebrate the radio career of Bing Crosby, including his holiday programs, and present a companion series of Christmas broadcasts, beginning December 6.

CROSBY CROONS

Tuesday, December 6–Saturday, December 10
Tuesday, December 13–Saturday, December 17

An overview of Crosby's radio work, from his first CBS broadcast in 1931, through his work for NBC at the helm of the *Kraft Music Hall*, to his years as host of ABC's *Philco Radio Time*. Plus guest performances with Jack Benny and Bob Hope, and recently discovered local broadcasts from the advent of his career.

CHRISTMAS CHEER

Tuesday, December 20–Saturday, December 24
Tuesday, December 27–Saturday, December 31

A variety of holiday broadcasts from the 1930s through the 1950s, with the work of Fred Allen, Jack Benny, Bob and Ray, and Edgar Bergen and Charlie McCarthy . . . plus the NBC Symphony, FDR lighting the White House Christmas tree, and wartime Christmas newscasts by H. V. Kaltenborn and Lowell Thomas.

Programs will be aired in packages beginning at 12:30 and 3:00 P.M.
On Tuesdays, the package will run again at 5:30 P.M.

Suggested contributions:
$4 for adults, $3 for children,
$2 for senior citizens and children under 13.

Programs are subject to change

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TRADING POST

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A free service to members of the Victorian Bing Crosby Society

Jack Higginson, 10 Holly Ave, Hollywell, Queensland 4216,
is still chasing a number of the Bing's Hollywood series. He is prepared to pay up to $Au35 per disc plus postage.

Anyone with spare copies of: FL30.913. FL30.914, FL30.846, FL30.916, FL30.843, FL30.844, FL30.841, FL30.916 or FL30.947.

Bob Schrader, 20 Harris Rd, Solomontown, Port Pirie, South Australia 5540, wants Crosby CD issues and has a new copy of the Tom Sawyer set for exchange. (Try writing to Derek Parkes, Bob.) He is also after a copy of the Ken Barnes book on Bing.

Rune Edvardsson, Aspvaegen 6, 640 53, Arla, Sweden,
is interesting in buying or trading tapes of Bing's KMH broadcasts for other KHM material.

Hugh McTeigue, 92 Barringa Road, Northbridge, NSW,
would like to correspond with other collectors by tape (words and music). He likes Bing and all singers of similiar vintage. He also likes all dance bands, British and American, of the 1930s and 40s, plus popular classics and musical comedy.

Ken Henderson, 349 Centre Rd, Bentleigh, Victoria 3204 (Ph: 557 1050),
has the facilities to copy videos for members, especially of Crosby movies. Ken also has available for sale on tape, videos of Blossom Time, Heart's Desire and Land Without Mercy.

Frank Murphy, 32 Ferndale Ave, Wallsend, Tyne & Wear, NE 28 7NE, UK,
has produced a beautiful 1989 Crosby Calendar (sorry that this is so late Frank). Unfortunately, we don't have cost details, but if you would like to send Frank a couple of IRCs, he will supply details.

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TAKE PART IN THE CROSBY POLL - PICK BING'S BEST AND WORST RECORDINGS

****

Leigh Brown, 434 Avant, San Antonio, Texas 78210, USA, writes, "Recently I had the occasion to compare likes and dislikes as regards the records of Bing Crosby during a certain segment of his career with a leading Crosby collector from Britain. It covered the Decca output from 1934 to 1936. He had of course heard them all and I had heard probably no more than half. In three separate categories, we didn't agree on a single record and were even a bit at odds on one. We were limited to only the top three in each category. I have decided to expand this into an all-out poll!

All interested are invited to choose which records of the period stated above which they consider to be Bing's 10 best overall, 5 best jazz, and 5 worst! All results will be published in a future 'Music-Leigh Speaking' section of one of my auction lists." (And also in these pages. BM)

LIFE SIZE PORTRAITS FROM YOUR OWN FAVOURITE BLACK AND WHITE PHOTOGRAPHS such as the one shown above, can be provided by Albert Leonard, 27 Lovell House, Shrubland, Hackney, London E8 4NJ, England. Postcard size originals preferred but magazine pictures are OK. Cost £9.00 worldwide inc postage.

Alternate Bing Crosby

Colin Pugh

Face The Music Medley - Part 1 (Soft Lights And Sweet Music)
BX 11416-A-B-C
8 March 1932

Notes:
For over 40 years this was acknowledged by collectors as being the rarest issue of Bing's commercial recordings. Subsequent microgroove re-issues have largely satisfied world-wide demand and considerably lessened it's rarity and the high prices the few existing copies were commanding. The original issue on a 12" 78 rpm shellac was pressed from Take B — clearly shown in the wax. However, a new generation of micro re-issues appeared proclaiming to be pressed from masters Take A and Take C. One alternate Take of this extremely rare recording came as a surprise to collectors but a **second** alternate Take was received with considerable scepticism. It is outside the scope of this treatise to quote actual issues and although the author possesses **all** issues, no really useful purpose would be served by so quoting. Suffice it is to say that **only two** Takes are identifiable — Take B and one other Take which may be assumed to be Take A or Take C. So the facts are these:

(1) 78 rpm issue of Take B (Taken as authentic)

(2) Micro re-issues stated as being Take C which is different to Take B.

(3) Micro re-issue stated as being Take C which is different to

Unfortunately, "duration" cannot be taken as an identifying issues. **All** issues to date are of a varying duration.

Departing from usual practice in order that collectors information for themselves, two separate points of id this instance.

Duration: 4:22 (78 rpm — Take B)
Bing sings two full choruses on this recording and both in the second chorus.
First
Variation: Note. 3:00 (B); 3:02 (alternate to Take B)

The first line of the second chorus ru

"Soft lights and swe

The variation is found on the wo

Take B: The word "and" is s

(Enquiries: John Joyce, Ravenswood House, Chowdene Bank, Gateshead NE9 6JP, U.K.)

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LETTERBOX

****

From John Edwards, Botany, NSW.

It was almost a shame - to me that is - that the feature 'Bing, The Chairman And The King', should stand out in what was an excellent edition of 'The Crosby Voice'. As an avid Crosby/Jolson fan, I would like to submit a few thoughts on the article.

To begin with, I'm not normally against expressing beliefs to drive home a point to enhance an article in some manner (or in this case, part of a chapter from a book). However the author, Jim Curtis, when referring to popular singers, writes "For there were only three great ones of we consider singers as singers and disregard the singer-songwriters instrumentalists from Chuck Berry to Bruce Springsteen; they are Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley. Each man can claim a superlative: Bing was the best loved, Frank was the greatest artist and Elvis was the greatest social phenomenon."

Okay, that's Curtis's opinion. However, he went on to signal that he was clearly out of his depth, when, speaking of Jolson he wrote "He [Jolson] never reached the stature of Bing, Frank or Elvis."

Is this was the same Jolson who was for a period in the latter part of the forties more popular on records than both Bing and Frank? The same Jolson of whom Bing looked up to as an artist and spoke of in such glowing terms, right up until the time of his death? The same Jolson of whom a young Sinatra, still to reach the pinnacle of his own success, said when asked to sing after Jolson at a party "How can you follow that?"

When Elvis Presley recorded 'Are You Lonesome Tonight', he chose to copy Jolson's recording of this fine song. (I believe that the greatest artistic difference between the two recordings was the unfortunate manner in which Presley mumbled the Jolson monologue.)

To comment further on Curtis' reference to Jolson, I can only say that for one artist who 'could not deal with or accept technology', Jolson's track record is really not too bad. He first started on radio in 1932 while Bing and others of his genre started a little earlier. Jolson is said to be the first artist to take part in an experimental TV programme in the early 30s. He also agreed to experiment with 'rhythmic diction' in his 1933 film 'Hallelujah I'm a Bum', successfully in my view and possibly the best film he made. The same film, by the way, is said to be the first film shown on US TV.

When The Jolson Story was released in 1946 causing Jolson's 're-discovery', everyone wanted him on radio. Jolson had a real ball guesting on other people's radio shows and in 1947, he took over the prestigious Kraft Music Hall for the second time. As for television, I don't personally believe that Jolson was any more reticent towards the medium than anyone else, remembering that Bing was said to be reluctant also.

If the author had expanded the text of his article to include 'the greatest showman' and 'the greatest entertainer', then I believe that Jolson would

be entitled to the 'golden gong' in both categories. Who knows? Maybe even Jim Curtis would agree with this!

I honestly do not believe that, for example, the decade 1955-65, described by Curtis as the years of Sinatra's greatest musical achievements, that any author would attempt to downgrade Jolson's stature and achievements as an artist in the manner as does Curtis. I find it hard to believe that they are doing it now! I can only hope that forty years after Bing's death, his status as an artist isn't abused by some Jim Curtis of the future!

There is yet further room for comment on the article regarding the reference to the fact that 'Jolson did not die at his Palm Springs home or at any other home he may have owned' - for Jolson passed away in the Saint Francise Hotel in San Francisco. His purpose for being at San Francisco at the time? To guest on Bing's radio show! Memo Mr Curtis: the date was October 23rd, 1950.

Finally, I would like to partially quote the following which I found on the back cover of a recently acquired book on Barry Manilow: "At the age of 36, Barry Manilow is arguably the world's most popular singer, already acknowledged as one of the greatest stars of the 20th century and ranking with Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley and The Beatles."

On reading this, I was immediately reminded of 'Bing, The Chairman and The King' as the back cover of The Barry Manilow Scriptbook goes a long way towards putting the Curtis chapter into its true perspective. Despite the obvious, I have been clearly taking the Curtis article too seriously!

From Ernest H. Sutkowski, Saddle River, New Jersey

My private college, The Westchester Business Institute, has been sponsoring a 15 minute Bing Crosby programme on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at 7 pm on WRTN-FM. Our selections are generally from the six decades during which Bing recorded. The hope is that we eventually will have played Bing's entire catalogue, pocketbook allowing.

From Rob Twiddy, Langwarrin

Last issue you mentioned a Guy Mitchell EP on Coronet. I have an LP called 'A Guy In Love' on US Columbia (C21155) with the same tracks plus eight others: Symphony of Spring, East of the Sun, The Moon Got in My Eyes, So do I, Alleghany Moon, Where I May Live With My Love, Under a Blanket of Blue, Me and the Moon. I would think that it was recorded in the late 1950s. There is no mention of Bing on the label. (Thanks also to John Edwards who drew this LP to our attention.)

From Girvan Paterson,

I hope that the new CBS 3 CD set will be issued here, you didn't mention an overseas address where it can be obtained. (Try Derek Parks. BM) It's amazing how much early Bing material has appeared on compact disc already, I mean the pre-Decca recordings. It really shows up MCA as being quite lethargic regarding Bing.

From Thane Cooper, Tasmania
Just out of interest, referring to Irving Berlin songs that Bing recorded commercially, shouldn't 'There's No Business Like Show Business' recorded with the Andrews Sisters on March 19, 1947 be included? (Certainly should be Thane. Oops! BM)

From Brian R Johnson, Canton, USA
Although I was but seventeen when Mr Crosby died, I have long been an admirer of his extraordinary talents, and I am appalled that so few young people today even know who he was. The generation now working themselves through the U.S. public school systems are, I'm afraid, being raised in a cultural vacuum.

Since it is my feeling that no-one can comprehend their future if they do not even know or understand their past, I am very interested in helping perpetuate knowledge of Mr Crosby and the era in which he dominated as America's premier international cultural symbol.

From Stan Leland, New York
A dealer here had a mint Decca White Label special of Bing singing 'The Girl With the Pigtails In Her Hair' made especially for Jack Kapp's daughter with the lyrics changed and her name inserted. This was a birthday present for her (I believe her 10th or 12th). Did you ever hear of this record? The dealer sold it for $150. (Can anyone supply further details of this collector's item? BM)

From Trevor Wagstaff, Essex
I enjoyed the 'Profiles' on Derek Parkes and John Bassett. It's a pity John is bowing out, but we have to keep things in perspective and put the family first - I guess.

From Graham Pascoe, Bathurst
(Late last year, Graham and his wife Helen returned from a trip to the USA. Following are excepts from a long letter he sent us regarding their holiday. BM)

On a northern journey, we made time to call at Tacoma and I had a delightful reunion with Ken twiss and Frank McMahon. They have the BCHS showroom in the Pantages Theatre Building looking just fine. As you know, Ken continues to work enthusiastically for the Society, but his health doesn't allow him to do all he would wish.

Ken gave me a videotape which includes clips of some of the publicity from various television programmes. (which will be screened at our next meeting BM)

Whilst in L.A. I did most of the more obvious Crosby things, like finding his three stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame and his handprints at the Chinese Theatre. It was interesting to see the incorrect birthdate on the plaque at his grave at the Holy Cross Cemetery in Culver City.

I thought that the Cocoanut Grove at the Ambassador Hotel warranted a special pilgrimage, so one Saturday I dragged Helen to that decaying building to see it while I had the chance. (It is on prime real estate and seems certain to be demolished soon.) Having been modernised in 1957, the Grove is no longer decorated with the papier mache cocoanut trees and palm fronds as it was when Bing made his mark there. The Grove is still used for functions occasionally, I was told. Especially interesting was a meeting with Margaret Tante Burk who has handled the hotel's P.R. for decades and has written a book called "ARE THE STARS OUT TONIGHT?" about the history of the Ambassador Hotel. Also interesting was the confirmation of the spelling of 'Cocoanut Grove', which almost invariably is spelt 'Coconut' in various publications about Bing.

I managed to do a few not-so-obvious things Crosby, too.

Russ Rullman told me about a group of radio enthusiasts called Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters, which occupies a basement of a Savings and Loan Company on the corner of Sunset and Vine, where the NBC Radio City complex once stood. So I paid them a visit. They made me welcome and showed me a microphone which Bing used regularly at NBC. And when they played part of one of the transcription discs of his program, I was amazed at the quality and clarity of the sound.

The Hollywood Heritage Society conducts regular but infrequent walking tours of Hollywood. One Sunday afternoon we set off on what was to be a long walk of the district. I was delighted when the guide pointed out the modest two-storey building which housed the Monmarte Cafe on its upstairs level, for this was apparently where Bing had his first job in L.A. after leaving Whiteman. The Rooseveldt Hotel, where he sang from time to time "to get heard by some of the important people" (according to Artie Shaw in Thompson's BING) has been beautifully restored to its former glory. It is a Hollywood showplace: a contrast to so many of the other buildings in the area. One could only wish the Heritage Society well in its endeavours to rehabilitate Hollywood's architecture.

That tour got me thinking about other locations where Crosby sang in those formative years. So I jumped at the chance to take a walking tour of downtown L.A. theatres with the Los Angeles Conservancy.

The outcome was rather depressing, as one might expect. The old theatres are long gone. The Boulevard Theatre, where Crosby and Rinker first performed professionally in L.A. was demolished many years ago. So was the Orange Grove Theatre. The Metropolitan, which had opened in 1923 as Grauman's Metropolitan but had a name change when the owners (Paramount) fell out with Sid Grauman in 1925, had gone too. It had been re-named the Paramount in 1929 and all that's left is an old sign high on the wall of what used to be the building next door, pointing to 'The Paramount Theatre'. From 1925 to 1929 it was known as the Metropolitan, the 'Grauman' having been dropped.

(As you can see, this massive issue of the Crosby Voice showed signs of getting out of hand in terms of size. Graham's letter has more of interest but space limitations preclude featuring it this issue. However, we'll continue it next magazine. BM)

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BITS 'N' PIECES

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* NEW VIDEO RECORDER PLAYS ALL WORLD SYSTEMS ON ORDINARY TV SET!
National Panasonic seem determine to make sure that it's a well kept secret but they now have a video machine that plays all systems in use around the world today through any TV set. i.e. PAL, NTSC (both speeds) and SECAM. Model number is NV-G500EM. Cost is about $Au1500 and you have to approach Panasonic direct to buy one. I've seen the machine in use and image quality is very good, although with NTSC there is a black band about a centimetre or two top and bottom of screen. However, the salesman told me that for an extra $100 or so, you can have your TV modified (most models are suitable for this) so that even these bands disappear. What this means of course is that you can now order tapes from other countries to play here without the both and cost of conversion. I presume that the same recorder is available in the USA and Europe so that PAL tapes can be played there also.

* BEA LILLIE, VET BOSWELL DIE
Sad to note the passing of that great British comedienne Beatrice Lillie. Bea, of course, appeared with Bing back in the 1930s in 'Doctor Rhythm'. I believe that she was in her 90s!

Also departed from the scene is Vet Boswell, last of the famous Boswell Sisters and sister of Connie and Martha. No Crosby collector needs to be reminded of their contribution to the Crosby scene.

* NEW TV SERIES - 'IDOLS OF THE 20TH CENTURY'
A British company called Lifetime Productions International Ltd is in the process of preparing a seven part TV series called 'Idols of the 20th Century' to be aired in 1990. To quote from a letter received by Keith Parkinson, "We will be looking at the major idols of six different areas - Screen, Music, Sport, Religion, Politics and Royalty.

As well as the stars themselves, we will also be focussing on their fans and followers, their reasons for becoming involved with a particular Idol and the way they express their admiration for them.

Bing Crosby is one of the idols we will be including in the series. Your club should provide us with valuable information for the Music episode. Would it be possible for you to send us details of your club - numbers of members, activities, events and so on. Does the club own any memorabilia or archive footage of Bing Crosby, or do you have any members with special collections or souvenirs, etc?"

Keith of course has replied to the letter, but any members, anywhere in the world who think that they may be able to help, are invited to write to the producers.

Please address your letters to Yinka Thomas, Lifetime Productions International Ltd, Suffolk House, 1 - 18 Whitfield Place, London W1P 5SP, United Kingdom. (Tel: 01 387 9808. Fax: 01 387 9106.)

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BING'S SERMONS

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Bing on Grantland Rice

Some weeks ago, I was watching the Ed Sullivan TV show. The major portion of his show that evening was built around a book recently published called 'The Tumult and the Shouting', penned by the late Grantland Rice, for many years the dean of American sportswriters. This book is a chronicle of over fifty years in the American sports scene in the views and opinions of a fine Southern gentleman who came out of Georgia in 1901 and who, by his courtly manner, his dignified treatment and his colourful writing puts sport on a very high plane in this land.

I used to know Granty pretty well. We played a lot of golf together; occasionally I have taken a toddy or two in his company. I really don't think I knew a man for whom I had more respect and admiration or of whom I was fonder.

A true journalist and a good writer, Granty had an unerring nose for the colourful figures in sports and for the dramatic situation. But he was also a kind man, almost benign. I never do recall reading anything that Grantland wrote that put the blast on anybody or anything. His contributions, his writings were purely constructive and his stories always good reading.

You know he coined a whole glossary of soubriquets and descriptive nomenclature and nicknames if you will for sports greats which are still current. For instance, like 'The Four Horseman' for Notra Dame backfield, 'The Brown Bomber' for Joe Louis, 'The Manassa Mauler', 'The Bambino of Swat' - oh and thousands just like that just as good too.

No prude, Mr Rice, and certainly no bluenose either in spite of his eminence in his field because his prose is racy and vigorous. Readers of 'The Tumult and the Shouting' will find that Granty had a rich sense of humour. They're going to discover that this book is just chock full of anecdotes which are plenty funny. Actually, I think just a selection of some of his newspaper and magazine articles such as the one done recently on Red Smith - I think this would have made quite a book. It certainly would have satisfied me, but this book is much more - it's a personal reminiscence of a fella who was there when it all happened. His reaction to so many of the great events that fellas of my age bracket still talk about when we're fanning a little in the cool of - .

Ed Sullivan, on the night I mention, had quite a few of the sports luminaries that he writes about, on his TV show. Incidentally, it seems to me that Ed Sullivan does a particularly good job on this sort of thing. He had film clips of some great contests and some great events held in the years passed - shots of Wills and Tilden and LaCoste, Dempsey and Willard and Sandy winning some great race or another. For me, the whole show was just pure enjoyment - solid entertainment. To tell you the truth, it gave my ticker a little tug too, cos I can remember when, (CHUCKLE), oh yes I can, in spades too!

But you really don't have to be a sports fan to love Granty's book. Though who in this broad land doesn't follow some sport or other? And he covered them. You can read it and love them anyhow. I know that I'm going to keep it on a handy place on my shelves where I can reach up and get it anytime I want and read a few excerpts from it to any of the young fry in my home - family or visitors, anyone I can pry away from the TV set.

He was quite a poet, Grant was you know. He could turn a note or an epic iambic for practically any event or any celebration, some of it quite good. I like best the one which ends as follows:

> "And when the great scorer in Heaven above
> Comes to write against your name,
> It's not if you won or lost that will count,
> But how you played the game."

'That's not a very pretentious piece I don't suppose but there's a big big truth in there. Yes it seems to me that Grantland Rice will be remembered for his craft and by his public for a long long time after men who seem more important now but who are actually only noisier and more contentious are long long forgotten.

This book costs a finsky ($5.00 for non-American readers) but I promise you it's worth it. That's 'The Tumult and the Shouting' by Grantland Rice.

(As spoken by Bing on his nightly 15 minute radio show of December 8, 1954.)

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And with those words from Bing, we'll end this very late edition of The Crosby Voice. Once again, my apologies for the delay. We <u>will</u> try to be quicker in future.

My very best wishes,

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BACK PAGE SPECIAL

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"It's Bing Crosby again!"

K. Pyne, London